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AND

THE CANTICLES,

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS,

AND

NOTES, CHIEFLY EXPLANATORY.

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apall

By GEORGE R. NOYES, D.D.,

HANCOCK PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, ETC., AND DEXTER LECTURER
IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

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PREFACE.

The present volume completes a series of translations of the Hebrew poetry which has come down to us, with the exception of the few pieces which are scattered through the historical part of the Scriptures. The author has been gratified by the commendation which the preceding volumes have received from critics of different denominations both in this country and in England. Their circulation, however, has been limited, as was, perhaps, for several reasons, to be expected, especially in the present state of theology. But the time which could be spared from official duties has been cheerfully given to the preparation of this volume, in the hope that this and the other translations by the author, if of any value, may contribute to a better understanding of the Bible, and give some aid toward procuring a better version of it, which may gradually win its way into general use.

The Introductions and Notes were designed chiefly for the use of readers unacquainted with the Hebrew language. But in some instances it seemed desirable to give the reasons on which an opinion was founded, which can be fully appreciated only by the Hebrew scholar. In all cases, it was the design to explain the meaning of the text, rather than to furnish reading which might be edifying independently of it. The Notes were placed at the end of the book for the satisfaction of those who, like the author, do not like to have their attention disturbed by notes when no difficulty is felt. Few persons are likely to derive benefit from comments, who will not take the trouble to look for them at the end of the volume.

CAMBRIDGE, February 23, 1846.

THE PROVERBS.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT part of Hebrew literature which has come down to us under the name of the Proverbs of Solomon contains something more than the title indicates. It is not wholly composed of short, sententious maxims and enigmatical propositions, such as commonly receive the name of proverbs, but in part of several didactic discourses of considerable length, containing exhortations to prudence and virtue, warnings against vice and folly, and eulogies upon true wisdom. The first nine chapters belong to the latter species of composition. These discourses, as well as the proper proverbs, are expressed in the peculiar form and language of Hebrew poetry, and without doubt belong to the most flourishing period of Hebrew literature. On the nature and history of this kind of composition the following just remarks have been made by Holden, in his Preliminary Dissertation to the Proverbs.

" Short and pithy sentences have been employed from the most remote antiquity as the vehicle of ethical instruction, and particularly adapted to the simplicity of the early ages. When writings were but few, and the reasonings of systematic philosophy almost unknown, just observations on life and manners, and useful moral precepts, delivered in concise language, and often in verse, would form a body of the most valuable practical wisdom, which, by its influence on the conduct, must have contributed largely to the peace and well-being of society. An acute remark, a moral adage, an admonition conveyed in a brief and compact sentence, would arrest the attention and operate upon the hearts of a rude people with a force of which there is no example in periods of greater cultivation. Yet, in every age, they are well fitted to impress the minds of the young and the uninformed; and, as they are the most valuable guides in the affairs of life, when we are called upon, not to deliberate, but to act, not to unfold a circuitous argument, but to transact business, all must find it highly advantageous to retain in their memories the maxims of proverbial wisdom.

"This method of instruction appears to be peculiarly suited to the genius and disposition of the Asiatics, among whom it has prevailed from the earliest ages. The Gymnosophists of India delivered their philosophy in brief enigmatical sentences;[*] a practice adopted and carried to a great extent by the ancient Egyptians.[†] The mode of conveying instruction by compendious maxims obtained among the Hebrews, from the first dawn of their literature, to its final extinction in the East through the power of the Mohammedan arms; and it was familiar to the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, as we learn from the testimony of St. Jerome.[‡] The eloquence of Arabia was mostly exhibited in detached and unconnected sentences, which, like so many loose gems, attracted attention by the fulness of the periods, the elegance of the phraseology, and the acuteness of proverbial sayings.[§] Nor do the Asiatics [||] at present differ in this respect from

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[*] Diog. Laert. Procœm., p. 4. Genev. 1615.

[†] Jablonski, Pantheon Ægypt. Proleg , c. 3. Brucker, Lib. 1, c. 8.

[‡] "Familiare est Syris, et maxime Palæstinis, ad omnem sermonem suum parabolas jungere." Hieron. Comment. Matt. xviii. 23.

[§] "Orationes autem eorum minime in partes suas juxta rhetoricæ apud Græcos et Latinos præcepta distributæ, nec methodice concinnatæ; adeo ut sententiarum in iis frequentium gemmæ vere dispersæ, minimeque inter se colligatæ videantur, totusque sermo arena sine calce recte dici posse videatur. In sententiarum tamen rotunditate, phrasium elegantia, ac proverbiorum acumine, invenies quod animum feriat." Pococke, Specimen Historiæ Arabum, p. 167, ed. White, Oxon. 1806. See Sale's Prelim. Discourse to the Koran, § 1, p. 35, Lond. 1812.

[||] Hottingeri, Hist. Orient., Lib. II., cap. 5. Erpenii Prov. Arab. Cent. duæ, Leidæ, 1614. Schultens, Antholog. Senten. Arab., Lug. Bat., 1772. "Veteres Arabum sententiæ sunt innumeræ; et per-

their ancestors; as numerous *amthâl*, or moral sentences, are in circulation throughout the regions of the East, some of which have been published by Hottinger, Erpenius, the younger Schultens, and others who have distinguished themselves by the pursuit of Oriental learning. 'The moralists of the East,' says Sir William Jones, 'have in general chosen to deliver their precepts in short, sententious maxims, to illustrate them by sprightly comparisons, or to inculcate them in the very ancient forms of agreeable apologues. There are, indeed, both in Arabic and Persian, philosophical tracts on ethics, written with sound ratiocination and elegant perspicuity; but in every part of the Eastern world, from Pekin to Damascus, the popular teachers of moral wisdom have immemorially been poets, and there would be no end of enumerating their works, which are still extant in the five principal languages of Asia.'[*]

"The ingenious, but ever-disputing and loquacious Greeks were indebted to the same means for their earliest instruction in wisdom. The sayings of the Seven Wise Men, the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, the remains of Theognis and Phocylides, if genuine, and the Gnomai of the older poets, testify the prevalence of aphorisms in ancient Greece. Had no specimens remained of Hellenic proverbs, we might have concluded this to be the case; for the Greeks borrowed the rudiments, if not the principal part, of their knowledge from those whom they arrogantly termed barbarians;[†] and it is only through the medium of compendious maxims and brief sentences that traditionary knowledge can be preserved.[‡] This mode of communicating moral and practical

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multa sunt volumina, quæ Amthâl sive Sententias complectuntur." Sir William Jones, Poeseos Asiaticæ Commentarii, p. 275, ed. Eichhorn, Lips., 1777. See D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, in Amthâl, and Les Maximes des Orientaux, at the end of Vol. IV. [See also Arabum Proverbia, edidit G. W. Freytag, Bonnæ ad Rhenum, 1838. This work is in four volumes octavo.]

[*] Disc. on the Philos. of the Asiatics, Works, Vol. I., p. 167, 4to.

[†] Brucker, Hist. Philos., Lib. II., cap. 1. Burnet, Archæologiæ, Lib. I., cap. 9. Shuckford's Connections, Pref. to Vol. I.

[‡] The greatest part of Greek aphorisms have, no doubt, perished;

wisdom accorded with the sedate and deliberative character of the Romans;* and, in truth, from its influence over the mind, and its fitness for popular instruction, proverbial expressions exist in all ages and in all languages:"†

The whole collection seems, in the title of the book, to be ascribed to Solomon as the author; and as in 1 Kings, iv. 32, that wise monarch is said to have uttered three thousand proverbs, such has been the received opinion of the Jewish and Christian churches.

In modern times, however, this opinion has been called in question. The learned and sagacious critic, Grotius, advanced the opinion, that the Book of Proverbs was not an original composition of Solomon, but a selection made by him from the proverbs of numerous writers who lived before his time.‡ This opinion

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having fallen into neglect when the dialectic art and a systematic philosophy gained ground among this acute and disputatious people. Eusebius, in his treatise against Marcellus, Lib. I., cap. 3, makes mention of Greek proverbs, and collectors of them. Among the *Deperdita* are the *Κύϱιαι Δόξαι* of Epicurus. Diog. Laert., Lib. X., p. 724. Cicero, De Finibus, Lib. II., § 7; De Nat. Deor., Lib. I., § 30.

* Seneca, Ep. 59. Both Suetonius (Vita Cæsaris, § 56) and Cicero (ad Divers., Lib. IX., Ep. 16) speak of the Dicta Collectanea of Cæsar; namely, Apophthegms collected by him; and some aphoristic sayings of the ancients are reported by Valerius Maximus, Lib. VII., cap. 2.

† Ray's Collection of English Proverbs is well known; and there is a book entitled, Adagia, sive Proverbiorum omnium quæ apud Græcos, Latinos, Hebræos, Arabes, &c., in Usu fuerunt Collectio, fol., Erf., 1646. Sir William Jones mentions the precepts of Odin, written in the Runic tongue, and the work of a Persian poet, Sheikh Attâr, as instances of aphoristic composition. (Comment. de Poes. Asiat., p. 274, ed. Eichhorn, Lips., 1777.) Grotius, in his Proleg. to the Proverbs, speaks of the *Ἐκλόγαι* of the Byzantine emperors.

‡ "Videtur hic liber esse ἐκλόγη optimarum sententiarum ex plurimis qui ante Salomonem fuere scriptoribus, quales ἐκλόγας multi imperatorum Constantinopolitanorum conscribi in suos usus fecere."

has been adopted, and maintained by a variety of arguments, by distinguished critics in modern times. The most important consideration, however, seems to be, that it is not probable, according to the analogy of the literature of other nations, that one man should be the author of so much proverbial wisdom. Such proverbs, it is said, have usually been the result of the general sense and experience of a community, and the product of a large number of minds. Solomon may have composed a considerable number of proverbial maxims, and other wise men of the nation, before and after him, may have done the same. Now it is not uncommon, when one has become distinguished for wisdom or wit in a nation, that many things should be ascribed to him of which he is not the author. Thus, the Greeks, it is said, ascribed most of their sententious maxims to Pythagoras; the Arabs theirs to Lokman and a few others; the Northern nations theirs to King Odin. In this way the Hebrews may have ascribed their proverbs to their wisest king, Solomon, because it was known of him that he had accomplished more than others in this kind of sententious poetry. Thus the opinion may have been formed, that Solomon was the author of the whole collection of the Hebrew proverbs. But that he was not in a strict sense the author of all the Proverbs has been thought probable, not only from the argument before mentioned, but also from the character of some of the maxims, which would come more naturally from persons in a situation in life different from that of a king. Chapter thirtieth is expressly ascribed to another author, namely, to Agur the son of Jakeh.*

These arguments, however, are not in the highest degree conclusive. It is very evident that the Book of Proverbs is not a mere collection of oral maxims, which were circulated among the people before they were committed to writing, like Freytag's collection of Arabic, or Ray's of English proverbs. The uniformity in the structure and expression of the proverbs shows that they were the result of elaborate composition. They are all marked by the peculiar characteristic of Hebrew poetry, the parallelism. There is also such a general similarity in the diction and style of composition in these proverbs, that it is difficult to believe, that, in their present form, they could have been the production of a great many authors. Many of the thoughts may have been in circulation among the people, expressed in a different way. But the style and the poetical form in which they are expressed seem to indicate that very few authors could have had a hand in the composition. From these considerations, and from the historical tradition of the Jews, the more probable conclusion seems to be, that Solomon was the composer of the greater part, at least, of the proverbs ascribed to him. Of others he may have been only the collector.

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* Some other considerations, of little weight, are adduced in De Wette's Introduction, Vol. II., p. 543, Amer. transl.

The book of Proverbs bears evident marks of being composed of several smaller collections, which were made at different times. It may accordingly be divided into five distinct parts.

I. The first part consists of the first nine chapters, and contains, not what according to the common use of language are called proverbs, but connected moral discourses in praise of wisdom, and urging to the practice of virtue, especially the virtue of chastity. The discourse or discourses in these nine chapters probably came from the same author. There seems to be no sufficient reason for rejecting the Jewish tradition that Solomon was the author of this part of the book. De Wette* objects that its didactic and admonitory tone, and its strict injunction of chastity, indicate a teacher of youth, a prophet, or a priest, as the author, rather than a king like Solomon. This objection seems to have some weight; but whether it should be regarded as decisive against the Jewish tradition concerning the authorship of the book is very doubtful. Our knowledge of the intellectual habits and moral character of Solomon at different periods of his life is too imperfect to allow one to conclude with confidence that he could not have been the author of this portion of the book. Bertholdt† also suggests that a person whose harem was so crowded as that of Solomon would not be likely to speak so highly of the happiness of a man with one wife, in ch. v. 18. He suggests, also, that the warnings against adultery, in ch. vi. 24, &c., and vii. 5–23, could hardly have come from one to whom it was known that his mother became his father's wife by the commission of that sin. Some few of the sentiments, also, in his opinion, indicate a private person as the author, rather than a king, such as in ch. vi. 26–31. The reader can judge how much force there is in these arguments. To me they seem to have but little weight. The experience of the effects of sin and folly may suggest wise precepts, as well as the enjoyment of the fruits of wisdom.

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* Einleitung, &c., § 281.

† Einleitung, &c., § 505.

II. The second part begins with chapter x. and extends to chapter xxii. 17. It is of a very different character from the nine preceding chapters. It contains proverbs properly so called; sententious maxims of morality or prudence, contained commonly in single verses, and having no connection with each other. This portion of the book has also a separate title, manifestly indicating that it once formed a collection by itself, independent of the first nine chapters.

III. At chapter xxii. 17, it seems probable that another collection begins. For it is introduced by an exhortation extending through several verses, similar to that in ch. i. 1–6. This third portion extends from chapter xxii. 17 to chapter xxv. It seems to be distinguished from the second part by a greater connection between the verses, and a more negligent use of the parallelism.

IV. The fourth part of the book begins with chapter xxv. It has a new title, or preface, setting forth that the proverbs contained in it were collected by men employed by King Hezekiah. It extends to chapter xxx.

V. The fifth portion of the book begins with chapter xxx. and extends to the end. It contains some proverbial maxims of a certain Agur, some advice addressed by his mother to a king called Lemuel, and an alphabetical poem, that is, a poem the lines of which begin with the different letters of the Hebrew alphabet in regular succession, the subject of which is the praises of a good wife.

The book of Proverbs is, in a moral and religious point of view, one of the most valuable portions of the Old Testament. It gives a view of the Jewish religion and morality, as pervading the common life of the Jews, much more favorable than that which we receive from the accounts of the ceremonies and forms which are elsewhere enjoined.

It is true that the religion and morality of the book of Proverbs will not bear a favorable comparison with those of Jesus Christ. Its morality is much less disinterested, being for the most part founded in prudence, rather than in love. Its motives generally are of a much less elevated kind than those which Christianity presents. The idea of the immortality of the soul does not appear to have dawned upon the mind of the author. Prudential motives, founded on a strict earthly retribution, are the principal encouragements to a life of virtue which he presents. This is well, it is true, as far as it goes; for man should ever be reminded of the laws of the Creator, and of the consequences of violating them. But higher and more disinterested and affectionate motives are necessary for the formation of a perfect character, a character which shall command our highest esteem and love.

But the religion of the book of Proverbs, when compared with that of the heathen world, appears to the highest advantage. Jehovah is there represented as the one creator of the universe, the governor of the world, and the disposer of human destinies. He is set forth as the first cause of all things, and man's highest duty is declared to be that of acknowledging in sentiment and practice the power, wisdom, and goodness of Jehovah in the creation and government of mankind. He is represented as holy and just, as knowing every thing which takes place on the earth, as loving, commending, and rewarding piety and virtue, and as abhorring and punishing sin and transgression.

> "For the ways of man are before the eyes of Jehovah,
> And he weighs well all his paths." Ch. v. 21.
>
> "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place;
> They behold the evil and the good." Ch. xv. 3.
>
> "The under-world, yea, the region of death, is before Jehovah;
> How much more the hearts of the sons of men." Ib. 11.
>
> "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes;
> But Jehovah weighs the spirit." Ch. xvi. 2.

The incomprehensibility of God is also set forth in this book in striking language. No human powers are capable of comprehending his nature, or understanding his works.

"I have not learned wisdom,
Nor have I the knowledge of the Most Holy.
Who has gone up into heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has bound up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what his son's name, if thou knowest?" Ch. xxx. 2–4.

The providence of God is represented as ever active and universal. It is over all his works, and nothing takes place which is not in accordance with his will and ordination. It is accomplished by the almighty power of Jehovah, and no mention is made in this book of the instrumentality of angels. Not only the outward fortunes, but the minds of men, according to it, are under the complete control of Jehovah.

"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart,
And lean not on thine own understanding;
In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will make thy paths plain." Ch. iii. 5, 6.

"To man belongs the preparation of the heart;
But the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah." Ch. xvi. 1.

"Commit thy doings to Jehovah,
And thy purposes shall be established." Ib. 3.

"As streams of water,
So is the heart of the king in the hand of Jehovah;
He turns it whithersoever he will." Ch. xxi. 1.

"It is the blessing of Jehovah that makes rich,
And he adds no sorrow with it." Ch. x. 22.

From this last quotation, Dr. Baur* takes occasion to remark, that, according to this book, "blessings are granted to God's favorites, independent of any exertions on their part." A more superficial and unfounded remark, or more inconsistent with the whole tenor of the book, could not have been made. The obvious meaning of the verse is, that, while wealth may be gained by labor by the wicked as well as the righteous, that wealth only *is free from sorrow* which is gained by means which have the approbation and blessing of Jehovah.

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* See Extracts from Baur's Theology of the Old Testament, London, 1838, p. 84.

In fact, the most prevalent idea in the whole book is that of an exact temporal retribution to men for their good and bad deeds. What inconceivable rashness, then, was it in Dr. Baur to assert the doctrine of the book to be, that blessings were granted to Jehovah's favorites, independent of any exertions on their part!

Another important religious doctrine taught in this book is, that the evils which afflict the righteous man are to be regarded by him as the chastenings of Jehovah, inflicted by God in order to promote the moral improvement of him whom he loves.

> "My son, despise not the correction of Jehovah,
> Nor be impatient under his chastisement!
> For whom Jehovah loves he chastens,
> Even as a father the son in whom he delights." Ch. iii. 11, 12.

But the character of God, as a father seeking to reclaim the wicked by manifestations of love, is not prominent in this book. The doctrine of Christ on this subject is so far beyond what can be found in the book of Proverbs, or in any part of the Old Testament, as to deserve the appellation of a new doctrine.

Dr. Baur thinks that he finds in this book the doctrine, that Jehovah predestinated men to wickedness and to punishment. The passage on which he founds the remark is contained in ch. xvi. 4. In the common version it is translated: — "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

Against the interpretation of this passage which makes it mean that Jehovah made man wicked on purpose to inflict evil upon him, the most obvious remark is, that common sense cannot reconcile it with the strict doctrine of retribution which pervades the book of Proverbs. The verse seems, also, not only to admit, but to require, a translation somewhat different. Thus, —

"Jehovah has ordained every thing for its end;
Even the wicked for the day of evil."

It appears to me, that, if we take into view the connection in which the verse stands, and also the general tenor of the book in regard to a righteous retribution, the meaning of the passage will appear to be nothing more than this, — that God has ordained every thing to that which answers to it, or is fit for it, and the wicked he has ordained for the day of evil, i. e. of punishment. There is not only a wise arrangement and correspondence in good things, but also in evil things; for the evil of punishment follows the evil of guilt; the evil day is appointed for the evil-doer. The idea, that the Almighty makes men wicked for the very purpose of inflicting evil on them, is too metaphysical for the writer, whose maxims are drawn from common sense and observation, and not from mystical or metaphysical musings.

The necessity of religion, which is spoken of under the name of the fear of Jehovah, is inculcated in this book in strong and emphatic language, as the beginning of wisdom and the fountain of happiness. Of sacrifices and offerings very little is said. The author insists almost exclusively upon the substantial duties of morality and religion. He seems to rely upon obedience to God's laws, amendment of life, justice, purity, and mercy, as the means of securing the forgiveness and favor of Jehovah, rather than upon formal offerings for sin.

"To do justice and equity
Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice." Ch. xxi. 3.

Such are the views of morality and religion taught in the book of Proverbs; views which may well command our admiration, when we consider when and where they were taught. Still, we must remember that our duty is now to be learned from Christ, rather than from Solomon. We must examine ourselves by the light of the Sermon on the Mount, rather than by that of the book of Proverbs. A greater than Solomon is here. He is come in his kingdom, and by his laws we are to be judged.

One interesting characteristic of the book of Proverbs is the frequent personification of wisdom, as an attribute of God, as well as the guide of men, which occurs in it. She is represented as existing prior to the Creation.

> "Jehovah formed me, the first of his creation,
> Before his works, of old;
> I was anointed from everlasting,
> From the beginning, even before the earth was made.
> When as yet there were no deeps, I was brought forth;
> When there were no springs, abounding with water......
> Then was I by him, as a master-builder;
> I was his delight day by day,
> Exulting continually in his presence;
> Exulting in the habitable part of his earth,
> And my delight was with the sons of men."
>
> Ch. viii. 22–24, 30, 31.

Wisdom is here represented as a female and a queen, the assistant, counsellor, and architect of the Almighty in the creation of the world out of chaos. This bold personification is perfectly agreeable to the genius of the Hebrew poets, who represent Zion as stretching out her hands, having none to comfort her; and the inanimate ways which lead to the temple of Jerusalem as mourning, because none came to the solemn festivals; and all the trees of the field as clapping their hands, in token of joy that the ransomed of Jehovah were returning to Zion.

That the representation of wisdom in the eighth chapter of this book is a personification, and not a real person, as the Church fathers and many in modern times have supposed is perfectly manifest from the connection in which it stands, and the previous personification of wisdom as an attribute of man. It is the same attribute by which kings reign and princes decree justice, that is found by all that love her, that loves them who love her, that cries aloud to the sons of men at the corners of the streets, which is immediately afterwards represented as the counsellor and architect of the Deity. If, when he speaks of wisdom as the guide and instructer of men, he does not refer to any thing personal, we have no reason to suppose, that, when he speaks of wisdom as the counsellor and architect of the Deity, he meant any thing more, than that all the works of God were created by his wisdom, and manifest its excellence.

This personification of wisdom in the book of Proverbs is worthy of attention, as illustrating the natural origin of the doctrine of a personal Logos, or intermediate personal agent between the Deity and created things, in the creation and government of the world. For how easy would be the transition from such a personification of wisdom to the representation of it as a real person!

A list of the principal commentators on this book may be seen in Rosenmüller's Scholia in Vetus Testamentum. The latest English works on the Proverbs, which I have seen, are, — An Attempt towards an Improved Translation of the Proverbs, with Notes Critical and Explanatory, and a Preliminary Dissertation, by the Rev. George Holden, London, 1819, 8vo., — A New Translation of the Proverbs, with Explanatory Notes, by William French, D. D., and Rev. George Skinner, M. A., London, 1831, — and the translation in Boothroyd's Version of the Bible, London, 1843. The best recent works on Proverbs, which I have examined, are the Scholia of Rosenmüller, Leipsic, 1829, — the German version and commentary of Umbreit, Heidelberg, 1826, — and the excellent German version of De Wette, in the third edition of his Translation of the Scriptures, Heidelberg, 1839.

THE PROVERBS.

I.

Introduction. Warning against evil company. — Ch. i. 1–19.

1 The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel:
2 From which men may learn wisdom and instruction,
And receive words of understanding;
3 From which they may gain the instruction of prudence,
Justice, equity, and uprightness;
4 Which will give caution to the simple,
To the young man wisdom and discretion;
5 The wise man may hear and increase his knowledge,
And the man of understanding may gain wise directions;
6 By which they may understand a proverb and a deep maxim,
The words of the wise and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 Hear, O my son, the instruction of thy father,
And neglect not the precepts of thy mother!
9 For they shall be a graceful wreath for thy head,
And chains around thy neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice thee,
Consent thou not!
11 If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait for blood,
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them up, as the under-world the living,
Yea, whole, as those that go down into the pit;
13 We shall find all kinds of precious substance,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14 Thou shalt cast thy lot among us;
We will all have one purse";—
15 My son, walk thou not in their way,
Refrain thy foot from their path!
16 For their feet run to evil,
And make haste to shed blood.
17 For as the net is spread in vain
Before the eyes of any bird,
18 So they lie in wait for their own blood;
They lurk secretly for their own lives.
19 Such are the ways of all who are greedy of unjust gain;
It takes away the life of its possessors.

II.

The invitation of Wisdom, and warning against neglecting her.—Ch. i. 20–33.

20 Wisdom cries out in the highway;
In the market-place she utters her voice;
21 At the head of the noisy streets she cries aloud;

At the entrances of the gates, throughout the city, she
proclaims her words [saying]:
22 "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simpleness?
How long will scoffers delight themselves in scoffing,
And fools hate knowledge?
23 Turn ye at my reproof!
Behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make known my words to you!

24 "Because I have called, and ye have refused,—
Because I have stretched out my hand, and no one has
regarded,—
25 Because ye have rejected all my counsel,
And have slighted my rebuke,—
26 I also will laugh at your calamity,
I will mock when your fear comes;
27 When your fear comes upon you like a storm,
And destruction overtakes you like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.
28 Then will they call upon me, but I will not answer!
They will seek me early,
But they shall not find me!
29 Because they have hated knowledge,
And have not chosen the fear of Jehovah,—
30 Because they would not attend to my counsel,
And despised all my reproof,—
31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,
And be filled with their own devices;
32 Yea, the falling away of the simple shall slay them,
And the carelessness of fools shall destroy them.
33 But whoso hearkens to me shall dwell securely,
And shall not be disquieted with the fear of evil."

III.

The advantages attending the pursuit of wisdom, and the evils to be avoided by such a course. — Ch. ii.

1 My son, O that thou wouldst receive my words,
And treasure up my precepts within thee!
2 That thou wouldst apply thine ear to wisdom,
And incline thy heart to understanding!
3 For if thou wilt call aloud to knowledge,
And lift up thy voice to understanding, —
4 If thou wilt seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasure, —
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 For Jehovah gives wisdom;
From his mouth proceed knowledge and understanding:
7 He lays up safety for the righteous;
He is a shield to them that walk uprightly:
8 He guards the paths of equity,
And defends the way of his servants.
9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and equity,
And uprightness, yea, every good path.

10 When wisdom enters into thy heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to thy soul,
11 Discretion will guard thee,
Understanding will preserve thee.
12 It will deliver thee from the way of the wicked,
From the men who speak perverse things;
13 Who forsake the paths of uprightness,
To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perverseness of the wicked;

15 Whose paths are crooked,
And who are froward in their ways.
16 It will deliver thee from the wife of another,
From the stranger, who uses smooth words;
17 Who forsakes the friend of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
18 For her house sinks down to Death,
And her paths to the mansion of the dead:
19 None that go to her return again;
They will not attain the paths of life.
20 Therefore walk thou in the way of good men,
And keep the paths of the righteous:
21 For the upright shall dwell in the land,
And the righteous shall remain in it;
22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the land,
And transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

IV.

Exhortation to obedience, to reliance upon God, to the due payment of offerings prescribed by the law, and to patience under the divine chastisements. The inestimable value of wisdom set forth. — Ch. iii. 1–26.

1 My son, forget not my teaching,
And let thy heart observe my precepts!
2 For length of days, and years of life,
And peace shall they multiply to thee.
3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee;
Bind them around thy neck,
Write them upon the tablet of thy heart:

4 Then shalt thou find favor and good success
In the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart,
And lean not on thine own understanding;
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will make thy paths plain.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes;
Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.
8 It shall be health to thy navel,
And moisture to thy bones.

9 Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
And with the first fruits of all thy increase;
10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
And thy vats overflow with new wine.
11 My son, despise not the correction of Jehovah,
Nor be impatient under his chastisement!
12 For whom Jehovah loves he chastens,
Even as a father the son in whom he delights.

13 Happy the man who finds wisdom,
Yea, the man who gets understanding!
14 For her profit is greater than that of silver,
And her gain than that of fine gold.
15 More valuable is she than pearls,
And none of thy precious things is to be compared with her.
16 Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.
17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her,
And happy is every one who holds her fast.

19 Jehovah by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding he framed the heavens.
20 By his knowledge the deeps burst forth,
And the clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep sound wisdom and discretion!
22 For they shall be life to thy soul,
And grace to thy neck.
23 Then shalt thou go on thy way securely,
And thy foot shall not stumble;
24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid,
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
25 Be not thou afraid of sudden alarm,
Nor of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh;
26 For Jehovah shall be thy confidence,
And he will keep thy foot from being taken.

V.

Various precepts. — Ch. iii. 27 – 35.

27 Withhold not kindness from those who need it,
When it is in the power of thy hand to do it.

28 Say not to thy neighbour, "Go, and come again,
And to-morrow I will give to thee," when thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour,
While he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Contend not with a man without cause,
When he hath done thee no harm.
31 Envy thou not the oppressor,
And choose none of his ways.
32 For the perverse man is the abomination of Jehovah,
But he is in friendship with the upright.
33 The curse of Jehovah is upon the house of the wicked,
But he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.
34 Scorners he treats scornfully,
But gives favor to the lowly.
35 The wise shall obtain honor,
But fools shall bear off shame.

VI.

Exhortation to wisdom and virtue. — CH. IV.

1 HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father,
And attend, that ye may learn understanding!
2 For I give you good instruction;
Forsake ye not my precepts.
3 For I was my father's son,
A tender and only child in the sight of my mother.
4 He taught me and said to me,
Let thy heart hold fast my words;
Keep my commandments, and live.
5 Get wisdom, get understanding;
Forget not, and depart not from, the words of my mouth.
6 Forsake her not, and she will guard thee;
Love her, and she will preserve thee.
7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore gain wisdom,

And with all thy gain, gain understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she will promote thee;
She will bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her;
9 She will give to thy head a graceful wreath,
A splendid crown will she bestow upon thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings!
So shall the years of thy life be many.
11 I will teach thee the way of wisdom,
I will lead thee in the right path.
12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be confined;
And when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go;
Keep her, for she is thy life.
14 Enter not into the path of the wicked,
And go not in the way of evil men;
15 Avoid it, pass not upon it,
Turn from it, and go away.
16 For they sleep not, unless they have done mischief;
Yea, their sleep is taken away, unless they have caused
some to fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
18 The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn,
Which grows ever brighter and brighter unto the perfect
day.
19 The way of the wicked is as thick darkness;
They know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words;
Incline thine ear to my sayings;
21 Let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep them within thy heart!
22 For they are life to those that find them,

And soundness to all their flesh.
23 More than any thing which thou watchest, watch thy heart;
For from it goes forth life.
24 Put away from thee a deceitful mouth,
And remove far from thee perverse lips.
25 Let thine eyes look straight forward,
And thine eyelids be directed before thee.
26 Give heed to the path of thy foot,
And let all thy ways be straight.
27 Turn not to the right hand or to the left;
Remove thy foot from evil.

VII.

Warning against unchastity. — Ch. v.

1 My son, attend to my wisdom,
And bow thine ear to my understanding;
2 That thou mayst keep discretion,
And that thy lips may preserve knowledge!
3 Truly, the lips of a strange woman drop honey,
And her mouth is smoother than oil;
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to Death;
Her steps lay hold on the under-world.
6 She gives no heed to the way of life;
Her paths sink, when she thinks not of it.

7 Hear me now, therefore, O ye children,
And depart not from the words of my mouth!

8 Remove thy way far from her,
And come not nigh the door of her house:
9 Lest thou give thy bloom to others,
And thy years to the cruel;
10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth,
And thine earnings remain in the house of the alien;
11 And lest thou mourn in thy latter end,
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
12 And say, "How have I hated instruction!
And how hath my heart despised reproof!
13 I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined mine ear to my instructers;
14 I have well-nigh fallen into every misery,
In the midst of the congregation and the assembly."

15 Drink water out of thine own cistern,
And running water out of thine own well:
16 So shall thy fountains overflow in the streets,
In the wide streets, as streams of water;
17 They shall belong to thee alone,
And not to strangers with thee;
18 And thy fountain shall be blessed,
Yea, thou shalt have joy in the wife of thy youth.
19 A lovely hind, a graceful mountain-goat,
Her breasts shall satisfy thee at all times,
And thou shalt be always ravished with her love.
20 Why, then, my son, wilt thou be ravished with a wanton,
And embrace the bosom of a stranger?
21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of Jehovah,
And he weighs well all his paths.
22 His own iniquities shall catch the wicked,
Yea, he shall be held fast by the cords of his own sins.
23 He shall die for want of instruction,
Yea, through the greatness of his folly he shall stagger [into the grave].

VIII.

Warning against suretiship, indolence, falsehood, and other vices.—
Ch. vi. 1–19.

1 My son, if thou hast become a surety for another,
If thou hast stricken hands for another,
2 If thou art ensnared by the words of thy mouth,
If thou art caught by the words of thy mouth,
3 Do this now, my son, and rescue thyself,—
Since thou hast fallen into the hands of thy neighbour,—
Go, prostrate thyself, and be urgent with thy neighbour!
4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids;
5 Rescue thyself, as a gazelle from the hand,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, O sluggard,
Consider her ways, and be wise!
7 She hath no governor,
Nor overseer, nor ruler;
8 Yet she prepares in the summer her food,
She gathers in the harvest her meat.
9 How long wilt thou lie in bed, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise from thy sleep?
10 "A little sleep,—a little slumber,—
A little folding of the hands to rest";—
11 So shall poverty come upon thee, like a robber,
Yea, want, as an armed man!

12 A worthless wretch is the unrighteous man,
Who walks with a deceitful mouth;
13 Who winks with his eyes,
Speaks with his feet,
And teaches with his fingers.

14 Fraud is in his heart,
He devises mischief continually;
He scatters contentions.
15 Therefore shall calamity come upon him suddenly;
In a moment shall he be destroyed, without remedy.

16 These six things doth Jehovah hate;
Yea, seven are an abomination to him:
17 Lofty eyes, a false tongue,
And hands which shed innocent blood;
18 A heart that contrives wicked devices,
Feet that are swift in running to mischief,
19 A false witness, that utters lies,
And him that sows discord among brethren.

IX.

Exhortation of obedience to parents, and warning against unchastity.
Ch. vi. 20 – vii.

20 Keep, O my son, the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the precepts of thy mother!
21 Bind them continually to thy heart,
Tie them around thy neck!
22 When thou goest, they shall guide thee;
When thou sleepest, they shall watch over thee;
And when thou awakest, they shall talk with thee.
23 For his commandment is a lamp, and her teaching a light;
Yea, the rebukes of correction lead to life.
24 They shall guard thee from the evil woman,
From the smooth tongue of the unchaste woman.

25 Desire not her beauty in thy heart,
Nor let her catch thee with her eyelids;
26 For by a harlot a man is brought to a morsel of bread,
And the adulteress lays snares for the precious life.
27 Can a man take fire into his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Can one walk upon burning coals,
And his feet not be scorched?
29 So is it with him who goes in to his neighbour's wife;
Whoever touches her shall not go unpunished.
30 Men do not overlook the thief,
Though he steal to satisfy his appetite, when he is hungry;
31 If found, he must repay seven-fold,
And give up all the substance of his house.
32 Whoso commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding;
He that does it destroys himself;
33 Blows and dishonor shall he get,
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
34 For jealousy is the fury of a man;
He will not spare in the day of vengeance;
35 He will not pay regard to any ransom,
Nor be content, though thou offer many gifts.

1 My son, keep my words,
And treasure up my commandments with thee!
2 Keep my commandments and live!
Yea, my teaching, as the apple of thine eye!
3 Bind them upon thy fingers,
Write them upon the tablet of thy heart!
4 Say to wisdom, "Thou art my sister!"
And call understanding "Kinswoman";
5 That they may guard thee from the wife of another,
From the stranger, that useth smooth words.

6 Through the window of my house,
Through the lattice I was looking forth,
7 And I saw among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths
A young man void of understanding.
8 He was passing through the street near her corner,
Yea, he was going the way to her house,
9 At twilight, in the evening,
At midnight, yea, in the thick darkness.
10 And, behold, a woman met him,
In the attire of a harlot, and subtle of heart, —
11 One noisy and ungovernable,
Whose feet abide not in her house, —
12 Who is now in the streets, now in the broad places,
And lurks near every corner.
13 She caught him and kissed him,
And with a shameless face said to him,
14 "Thank-offerings have been upon me,
And this day have I performed my vows;
15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee!
16 I have spread my bed with coverlets,
With tapestry of the thread of Egypt.
17 I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning,
Let us solace ourselves with caresses.
19 For the good-man is not at home;
He is gone a long journey;
20 He has taken a purse of money with him;
At the day of the full moon he will return."
21 By her much fair speech she seduced him;
By the smoothness of her lips she drew him away.
22 He goes after her straightway,

As an ox goes to the slaughter,
Or as one in fetters to the chastisement of the fool,
23 Till an arrow strike through his liver;
As a bird hastens into the snare,
And knows not that it is laid for its life.

24 Now, therefore, ye children, hearken to me,
And attend to the words of my mouth!
25 Let not thy heart turn aside to her ways;
Go not astray in her paths!
26 For many are the wounded which she has cast down;
Yea, countless is the number of those slain by her.
27 Her house is the way to the under-world,
Leading down to the chambers of death.

X.

The excellence of wisdom. — Ch. viii.

1 Does not wisdom cry aloud,
And understanding put forth her voice?
2 Upon the top of the high places,
By the wayside,
In the cross-ways,
She takes her station.
3 By the side of the gates,
In the entrance of the city,
In the approaches to the doors, she cries aloud.
4 "To you, O men, do I call,
And my voice is to the sons of men!
5 O ye simple ones, learn wisdom,
And ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart!

6 Hear, for I speak excellent things,
And my lips utter that which is right.
7 For my mouth speaks truth,
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth are in uprightness;
There is nothing crooked or deceitful in them;
9 They are all plain to the man of understanding,
And direct to them that find knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction, and not silver,
And knowledge rather than choice gold!
11 For wisdom is better than pearls,
And no precious things are to be compared with her.

12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge of sagacious plans.
13 The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil;
Pride, and arrogance, and the evil way,
And the deceitful mouth do I hate.
14 Counsel is mine, and sound reason;
I am understanding; I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice.
16 By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth.
17 I love them that love me,
And they who seek me early shall find me.
18 Riches and honor are with me;
Yea, splendid riches and prosperity.
19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of equity.
21 I make those, who love me, to possess substance;
Yea, I fill all their treasuries.

22 "Jehovah formed me, the first of his creation,
Before his works, of old;
23 I was anointed from everlasting,
From the beginning, even before the earth was made.
24 When as yet there were no deeps, I was brought forth;
When there were no springs, abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
Yea, before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 Ere yet he had made the land and the wastes,
And the first of the clods of the earth.
27 When he framed the heavens, I was there;
When he drew a circle upon the face of the deep;
28 When he made firm the sky above,
And the fountains of the deep rushed forth;
29 When he gave to the sea its bounds,
That the waters should not pass their border;
When he marked out the foundations of the earth;
30 Then was I by him, as a master-builder;
I was his delight day by day,
Exulting continually in his presence;
31 Exulting in the habitable part of his earth,
And my delight was with the sons of men.

32 "Now, therefore, ye children, hearken to me!
For happy are they that keep my ways!
33 Hear instruction and be wise!
Yea, reject it not!
34 Happy the man who hearkens to me,
Who watches at my gates day by day,
Who waits at the posts of my doors;
35 For he that finds me finds life,
And obtains favor from Jehovah;
36 But he who misses me does violence to himself;
All they who hate me love death."

XI.

Wisdom represented as inviting to a sumptuous feast all who need her bounty. The different reception given to admonition by a wise man and a scoffer. The foundation of true wisdom. Warning against the delusions of folly. — Ch. ix.

1 Wisdom has builded her house;
She has hewn out her seven pillars.
2 She has killed her fatlings;
She has mixed her wine;
Yea, she has furnished her table.
3 She has sent forth her maidens;
She cries aloud upon the highest places of the city:
4 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in hither!"
To him, that is void of understanding, she saith,
5 "Come, eat of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mixed!
6 Forsake folly, and live!
And go forward in the way of understanding!

7 "He who corrects a scoffer
Brings upon himself shame;
And he who rebukes the wicked
Brings upon himself a stain.
8 Rebuke not a scoffer, lest he hate thee;
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.
9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser;
Teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning.
10 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Most Holy is understanding.
11 Yea, through me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
12 If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself;
And if thou art a scoffer, thou alone must bear it."

13 The foolish woman is clamorous ;
She is very simple, and cares for nothing.
14 She sits at the door of her house,
Upon a seat in the high places of the city,
15 To call aloud to those that pass by,
Who go straight forward in their ways, —
16 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in hither!"
And to him that is void of understanding she says, —
17 "Stolen water is sweet,
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant."
18 But he considers not that the dead are there,
That in the vales of the under-world are her guests.

XII.

Various unconnected proverbs. — CH. X. – XXII. 16.

1 THE Proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness do not profit ;
But righteousness delivers from death.

3 Jehovah will not suffer the righteous to famish ;
But he disappoints the craving of the wicked.

4 He that works with a slack hand becomes poor ;
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

5 He that gathers in summer is a wise son ;
But he that sleeps in harvest is a son causing shame.

6 Blessings are upon the head of the just;
But violence shall cover the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the righteous man is blessed;
But the name of the wicked shall rot.

8 He who is wise in heart receives precepts;
But the foolish talker falls headlong.

9 He that walks uprightly walks securely;
But he that perverts his ways shall be punished.

10 He that winks with the eye causes sorrow;
And a foolish talker falls headlong.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life;
But violence shall cover the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirs up strife;
But love covers all offences.

13 Upon the lips of a man of understanding wisdom is found;
But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise men treasure up knowledge;
But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city;
Their poverty is dismay to the poor.

16 The earnings of the righteous minister to life;
The revenues of the wicked to ruin.

17 He that keeps instruction is in the path of life;
But he that refuses reproof goes astray.

18 He that hides hatred hath lying lips;
And he that utters slander is a fool.

19 In the multitude of words there wants not offence ;
But he that restrains his lips is wise.

20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver ;
The understanding of the wicked is of little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many ;
But fools die through want of wisdom.

22 It is the blessing of Jehovah that makes rich,
And he adds no sorrow with it.

23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief ;
But a man of understanding has wisdom.

24 The fear of the wicked shall come upon him ;
But the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

25 As the whirlwind passes by, so is the wicked no more ;
But the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
So is the sluggard to them that send him.

27 The fear of Jehovah prolongs life ;
But the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness ;
But the expectation of the wicked shall come to nothing.

29 Jehovah is strength to him that is upright in his way ;
But he is destruction to them that do iniquity.

30 The righteous shall never be moved ;
But the wicked shall not dwell in the land.

31 The mouth of the righteous man yields wisdom ;
But the perverse tongue shall be cut off.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable ;
But the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

1 False scales are an abomination to Jehovah ;
But a perfect weight is his delight.

2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace ;
But with the humble is wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them ;
But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath ;
But righteousness delivers from death.

5 The righteousness of the good man makes his way plain ;
But the wicked falls through his own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them ;
But transgressors are caught in their own mischief.

7 When the wicked man dies, his hope comes to an end,
Yea, the expectation of the unjust comes to an end.

8 The righteous man is delivered from trouble,
And the wicked comes into it in his stead.

9 By his mouth the profane man destroys his neighbour ;
But by the knowledge of the righteous are men delivered.

10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices ;
And when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted ;
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

12 He who despises his neighbour is void of understanding ;
A man of discernment holds his peace.

13 He who goes about as a tale-bearer reveals secrets ;
But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall ;
But in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.

15 He that is surety for another shall smart for it ;
But he that hates suretiship is sure.

16 A graceful woman obtains honor,
As strong men obtain riches.

17 The merciful man does good to himself ;
But the cruel man torments his own flesh.

18 The wicked toils for deceitful wages ;
But he who sows righteousness shall have a sure reward.

19 As righteousness tends to life,
So he who pursues evil pursues it to his death.

20 The perverse in heart are the abomination of Jehovah ;
But the upright in their way are his delight.

21 Through all generations the wicked shall not go unpunished ;
But the posterity of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a beautiful woman who is without discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous is only good ;
But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

24 There is that scatters, and yet increases ;
And there is that withholds more than is right, yet he comes to want.

25 The bountiful man shall be enriched,
And he that waters shall himself be watered.

26 Him that keeps back bread-corn the people curse ;
But blessing shall be upon the head of him that sells it.

27 He, who earnestly seeks good, seeks favor ;
But he that seeks mischief, it shall come upon him.

28 He who trusts in his riches shall fall ;
But the righteous shall flourish as a leaf.

29 He that harasses his household shall inherit wind,
And the fool shall be the servant of the wise.

30 The fruit of a righteous man is that of a tree of life,
And the wise man winneth souls.

31 Behold, the righteous man is requited on earth ;
Much more the wicked man and the sinner !

1 He who loves correction loves knowledge ;
But he who hates rebuke remains stupid.

2 The good man obtains favor from Jehovah ;
But the man of wicked devices he condemns.

3 A man shall not be established by wickedness ;
But the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

4 A good wife is the crown of her husband ;
But she who causes shame is as rottenness in his bones.

5 The purposes of the righteous are just ;
The designs of the wicked are deceitful.

6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for men's blood ;
But the mouth of the upright delivers them.

7 The wicked are overthrown, and are no more;
But the house of the righteous shall stand.

8 A man will be commended according to his wisdom;
But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

9 Better is he that demeans himself, and has a servant,
Than he that exalts himself, and has no bread.

10 The righteous man regards the desires of his beast;
But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

11 He who tills his own land shall be satisfied with bread;
But he who follows worthless persons is void of understanding.

12 The wicked man longs after the prey of evil-doers;
But the root of the righteous yields fruit.

13 In the transgression of the lips is a dangerous snare;
But the righteous man shall escape from trouble.

14 By the fruit of a man's mouth he shall be filled with good,
And the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes;
But he that hearkens to counsel is wise.

16 A fool's wrath is instantly known;
But he that hides insult is wise.

17 He that speaks truth testifies what is right;
But a false witness deceit.

18 There is who speaks rashly, like the piercing of a sword;
But the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever;
But the tongue of falsehood only for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of those who contrive evil;
But to those who counsel peace shall be joy.

21 There shall no evil happen to the righteous;
But the wicked shall be filled with calamity.

22 False lips are the abomination of Jehovah;
But they that deal truly are his delight.

23 A prudent man conceals his knowledge;
But the heart of fools proclaims their foolishness.

24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule;
But the slothful shall be under tribute.

25 Anxiety in the heart of a man bows it down;
But a kind word makes it glad.

26 The righteous becomes superior to his neighbour;
But the way of the wicked causes them to err.

27 The slothful man takes not that which he hunts;
But a diligent man has precious substance.

28 In the path of righteousness is life;
Yea, in her pathway there is no death.

1 A wise son hearkens to the instruction of his father;
But a scoffer hearkens not to rebuke.

2 By the fruit of a man's mouth he shall eat good;
But the appetite of transgressors shall be sated with violence.

3 He who keeps his mouth keeps his life;
But destruction shall be to him who opens wide his lips.

4 The appetite of the sluggard longs, and has nothing;
But the appetite of the diligent is fully satisfied.

5 The righteous man hates falsehood;
But the wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame.

6 Righteousness preserves him who is upright in his way;
But wickedness causes the sinner to slip.

7 There is who makes himself rich, yet has nothing,—
Who makes himself poor, yet hath great riches.

8 A man's wealth is the ransom of his life;
But the poor man hears no threatenings.

9 The light of the righteous shall rejoice;
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

10 By pride comes only contention;
But with the well advised is wisdom.

11 Wealth dwindles away sooner than a breath;
But he who gathers it into his hands increases it.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick;
But the desire accomplished is a tree of life.

13 He that despises the word shall be destroyed;
But he who reverences the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The instruction of the wise is a fountain of life;
By it men depart from the snares of death.

15 A good understanding wins favor;
But the way of transgressors is hard.

16 Every prudent man acts with knowledge;
But a fool spreads abroad his folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble;
But a faithful ambassador is health.

18 Poverty and shame are for him that rejects instruction;
But he that regards reproof shall come to honor.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul;
But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

20 He that walks with wise men shall be wise;
But the companion of fools shall be destroyed.

21 Calamity pursues the wicked;
But the righteous is rewarded with good.

22 The good man leaves his substance to his children's
children;
But the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

23 There is much food from the tilled land of the poor;
But there is who is brought low for want of uprightness.

24 He that spares the rod hates his son;
But he who loves him chastens him early.

25 The righteous man eats to the satisfying of his desire;
But the stomach of the wicked suffers want.

1 The wise woman builds her house;
But the foolish tears it down with her hands.

2 He that walks in uprightness fears Jehovah;
But he who is perverse in his ways despises him.

3 In the mouth of the foolish is a scourge of his pride;
But the lips of the wise preserve them.

4 Where there are no oxen, the fodder-loft is clean;
But there is great increase by the strength of the ox.

5 A faithful witness does not lie;
But a false witness pours forth lies.

6 The scoffer seeks wisdom, and finds it not;
But knowledge is easy to the man of understanding.

7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
In whom thou perceivest not the lips of knowledge.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is in giving heed to his way;
But the folly of fools is deceit.

9 Fools make a mock at sin;
But with the upright is favor.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
And no stranger intermeddles with its joy.

11 The house of the wicked shall be destroyed;
But the tent of the upright shall flourish.

12 There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way to death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful,
And the end of joy is grief.

14 The perverse in heart shall be filled with his own ways;
And from himself shall the good man be satisfied.

15 The simple man believes every word;
But the prudent looks well to his steps.

16 The wise man fears, and departs from evil;
But the fool is haughty and confident.

17 He who is soon angry will commit folly;
And the man of wicked devices will be hated.

18 The simple inherit folly;
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before the good;
Yea, the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is hated even by his own neighbour;
But the rich has many friends.

21 He who despises his neighbour sins;
But happy is he who hath mercy on the poor.

22 Do not they who devise evil perish?
And do not they who devise good meet with kindness and truth?

23 In all labor there is profit;
But the talk of the lips tends only to penury.

24 Riches are a crown to the wise;
But the promotion of fools is folly.

25 A true witness saves lives;
But a deceitful witness pours forth lies.

26 In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence;
Yea, to his children he will be a refuge.

27 The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life;
By it men avoid the snares of death.

28 In a numerous people consists the glory of a king;
But the want of subjects is the destruction of a prince.

29 He who is slow to anger is of great understanding;
But he who is of a hasty spirit proclaims folly.

30 A quiet heart is the life of the flesh;
But envy is rottenness to the bones.

31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker;
But he who has mercy on the poor honors him.

32 By his wickedness the wicked is thrust down;
But the righteous has hope even in death.

33 Wisdom rests quietly in the heart of the wise;
But in the breast of fools it has a loud sound.

34 Righteousness exalts a people;
And the reproach of nations is sin.

35 The king's favor is toward a wise servant;
But his wrath is against him that causes shame.

1 A soft answer turns away wrath;
But harsh words stir up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge pleasing;
But the mouth of fools pours forth folly.

3 The eyes of Jehovah are in every place;
They behold the evil and the good.

4 A mild tongue is a tree of life;
But perverseness therein is a wound in the spirit.

5 The fool despises the correction of his father;
But he that regards reproof is prudent.

6 In the house of the righteous is much wealth;
But in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise spread abroad knowledge;
But the heart of the foolish what is not sound.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah;
But the prayer of the righteous is his delight.

9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah ;
But him who follows after righteousness he loves.

10 Sore correction shall be to him that forsakes the way ;
He that hates reproof shall die.

11 The under-world, yea, the region of death, is before Jehovah ;
How much more the hearts of the sons of men !

12 The scoffer loves not him that reproves him ;
He resorts not to the wise.

13 A joyous heart makes a bright countenance ;
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of the man of understanding seeks knowledge ;
But the mouth of fools feeds upon folly.

15 The days of the afflicted are all evil ;
But he that has a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

16 Better is a little, with the fear of Jehovah,
Than much treasure, and trouble therewith.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs, where there is love,
Than the fatted ox, and hatred with it.

18 The passionate man stirs up strife ;
But he who is slow to anger appeases strife.

19 The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns ;
But the path of the righteous is smooth.

20 A wise son gladdens his father ;
But a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom ;
But the man of understanding walks uprightly.

22 Without counsel plans come to naught;
But with a multitude of counsellors they are established.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth;
And a word in due season, how good is it!

24 The path of life leads upward for the wise,
So that he departs from the pit beneath.

25 Jehovah destroys the house of the proud;
But he fixes firmly the landmark of the widow.

26 Evil devices are an abomination to Jehovah;
But pleasant words are pure.

27 He who is greedy of gain troubles his own house;
But he who hates gifts shall live.

28 The heart of the righteous meditates upon his answer;
But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

29 Jehovah is far from the wicked;
But he hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 A smiling countenance rejoices the heart,
And good tidings make the bones fat.

31 The ear that hearkens to the reproof of life
Shall dwell among the wise.

32 He that refuses instruction despises his own life;
But he that hearkens to rebuke gets understanding.

33 The fear of Jehovah guides to wisdom,
And before honor is humility.

1 To man belongs the preparation of the heart;
But the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah.

2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes ;
But Jehovah weighs the spirit.

3 Commit thy doings to Jehovah,
And thy purposes shall be established.

4 Jehovah has ordained every thing for its end ;
Even the wicked for the day of evil.

5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to Jehovah ;
From generation to generation he shall not be unpunished.

6 Through kindness and truth iniquity is forgiven,
And through the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil.

7 When a man's ways please Jehovah,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better is a little, with righteousness,
Than great revenues, without right.

9 The heart of man devises his way,
But Jehovah establishes his steps.

10 A divine sentence is upon the lips of the king ;
His mouth transgresses not in judgment.

11 A just balance and scales are the appointment of Jehovah ;
All the weights of the bag are his work.

12 The doing of wickedness is an abomination to kings ;
For by righteousness is the throne established.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings,
And they love him who speaks right things.

14 The wrath of the king is like messengers of death ;
But a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life,
And his favor is like a cloud bringing the latter rain.

16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!
Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver.

17 It is the highway of the upright to depart from evil;
He that takes heed to his way preserves his life.

18 Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better is it to be of a humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to share the spoil with the proud.

20 He who gives heed to the word shall find success;
And he who trusts in Jehovah, happy is he!

21 The wise in heart shall be called intelligent,
And the sweetness of the lips increases learning.

22 Understanding is a wellspring of life to him that has it;
And the chastisement of fools is their folly.

23 The heart of the wise man instructs his mouth
And adds learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,
Sweet to the taste, health to the bones.

25 There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way to death.

26 He that labors labors for himself;
For his mouth urges him on.

27 A worthless man devises mischief,
And upon his lips there is, as it were, a burning fire.

28 A deceitful man stirs up strife,
And a whisperer separates friends.

29 A man of violence entices his neighbour,
And leads him into a way which is not good.
30 He shuts his eyes to devise fraud;
He bites his lips; he has accomplished the mischief!

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory,
If it be found in the way of righteousness.

32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
And he who rules his spirit, than he that takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap;
But the whole decision thereof is from Jehovah.

1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith,
Than a house full of banquets with strife.

2 A prudent servant rules over a son who causes shame;
Yea, with brothers he shares the inheritance.

3 The refining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold;
But Jehovah tries hearts.

4 He is an evil-doer who listens to false lips;
He is a liar who gives ear to a wicked tongue.

5 Whoso mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;
He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

6 Children's children are the crown of the aged,
And their fathers the glory of sons.

7 Excellent speech becomes not a fool;
How much less lying lips the noble!

8 A gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him who takes it;
Whithersoever it turns, it has success.

9 He that covers offences seeks love;
But he that repeats a matter separates friends.

10 A reproof penetrates deeper into a wise man
Than a hundred stripes into a fool.

11 A rebellious man seeks only evil;
Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of her whelps,
Rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoso returns evil for good,
Evil shall not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water;
Therefore, before contention breaks out, give it up.

15 He that justifies the wicked,
And he that condemns the just,
Both alike are an abomination to Jehovah.

16 To what purpose is money in the hand of a fool?
To get wisdom? It is sense that is wanting!

17 A friend loves at all times;
But in adversity he is born a brother.

18 A man void of understanding strikes hands,
And becomes surety for another.

19 He who loves offence loves quarrels;
He who raises high his gate seeks ruin.

20 He that is of a deceitful heart finds no good;
And he that has a false tongue falls into mischief.

21 The fool causes grief to him that begot him;
Yea, the father of the fool has no joy.

22 A merry heart is a good medicine;
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

23 The wicked man takes a gift out of the bosom,
To pervert the ways of judgment.

24 Wisdom is before the face of him that has understanding;
But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father,
And bitterness to her that bore him.

26 Moreover, to fine the righteous is not good,
Nor to smite the noble for their rectitude.

27 He that spares his words is imbued with knowledge;
And he that has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

28 Even a fool, when he is silent, is accounted wise;
He that shuts his lips is a man of understanding.

1 He who separates himself from others seeks his own desire;
He is offended with all sound wisdom.

2 The fool has no delight in understanding,
But rather in revealing his own mind.

3 When a wicked man comes, there comes also contempt,
And with baseness, shame.

4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters,
And the wellspring of wisdom an overflowing brook.

5 It is not good to be partial to the wicked,
So as to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

6 The lips of a fool enter into contention,
And his mouth calls for blows.

7 A fool's mouth is his destruction,
And his lips are a snare for his life.

8 The words of a talebearer are like dainties;
For they go down to the innermost parts of the body.

9 Moreover, he that is slothful in his work
Is brother to him that is a great waster.

10 The name of Jehovah is a strong tower;
The righteous runs to it and is safe.

11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city,
And as a high wall, in his own conceit.

12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,
And before honor is humility.

13 He who gives an answer before he has heard,
It is folly and shame to him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his disease;
But a wounded spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the intelligent gets knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

16 A gift makes room for a man,
And brings him into the presence of the great.

17 He that first pleads his cause appears just;
But his opponent comes, and searches him through.

18 The lot causes contentions to cease,
And parts asunder the mighty.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city;
Yea, their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

20 With the fruit of a man's mouth shall his stomach be filled;
He shall be filled with the produce of his lips.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue;
They that love it shall eat its fruit.

22 He that finds a wife finds a blessing,
And obtains favor from Jehovah.

23 The poor uses entreaties;
But the rich answers roughly.

24 A man of many associates brings upon himself ruin;
Yet there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

1 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity,
Than he who is of false lips and a fool.

2 Moreover, without knowledge zeal is not good,
And he that hastes with his feet stumbles.

3 The folly of man perverts his way,
And then his heart frets against Jehovah.

4 Wealth makes many friends;
But the poor is separated from his neighbour.

5 A false witness shall not be unpunished,
And he that speaks lies shall not escape.

6 Many are they who caress the liberal,
And every one is the friend of him who gives gifts.

7 All the brethren of the poor man hate him;
How much more do his friends go far from him!
He follows after their words, — they are gone!

8 He that gets wisdom loves himself;
He that keeps understanding shall find good.

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished,
And he that speaks lies shall perish.

10 Luxury is not seemly for a fool;
Much less should a servant have rule over princes.

11 A man of understanding is slow to anger;
Yea, it is his glory to pass over an offence.

12 The wrath of a king is like the roaring of a lion;
But his favor like dew upon the grass.

13 A foolish son is a calamity to his father,
And the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

14 Houses and riches are inherited from fathers;
But a prudent wife is from Jehovah.

15 Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,
And the idle person shall suffer hunger.

16 He that keeps the commandment keeps his life;
But he that neglects his ways shall die.

17 He who hath pity on the poor lends to Jehovah,
And that which he gives will he repay him.

18 Chasten thy son while there is hope,
And let not thy soul desire his death.

19 A man of great wrath will suffer punishment;
For if thou deliver him, yet must thou do it again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That thou mayst be wise in thy latter years.

21 Many are the devices in the heart of a man;
But the purpose of Jehovah, that shall stand.

22 That which makes a man beloved is kindness;
But a poor man is better than a man of deceit.

23 The fear of Jehovah tends to life,
And he that has it shall abide satisfied;
He shall not be visited with evil.

24 The slothful man dips his hand into the dish;
He does not bring it back even to his mouth.

25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become prudent;
Reprove a man of understanding, and he will discern knowledge.

26 The son that causes shame and disgrace plunders his father
And chases away his mother.

27 Cease, my son, to listen to the instruction
That causes thee to wander from the words of knowledge!

28 A worthless witness scoffs at justice,
And the mouth of the wicked swallows down iniquity.

29 Punishments are prepared for scoffers,
And stripes for the back of fools.

1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
And he that reels with it is not wise.

2 The terror of a king is like the roaring of a lion;
He that rages against him sins against himself.

3 It is an honor to a man to cease from strife ;
But every fool is contentious.

4 The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold ;
Therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

5 A design in the heart of a man is like deep water ;
But a man of understanding draws it out.

6 Many will proclaim their own kindness ;
But a faithful man who can find ?

7 The righteous man walks in integrity ;
Happy will be his children after him !

8 The king, sitting upon the throne of judgment,
With his eyes scatters all the wicked like chaff.

9 Who can say, " I have kept my heart clean ;
I am free from sin ? "

10 Divers weights and divers measures, —
Both of them are an abomination to Jehovah.

11 Even in childhood one makes himself known by his doings,
Whether his actions will be pure and right.

12 The ear that hears, and the eye that sees, —
Jehovah made them both.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty ;
Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

14 " Naught ! naught ! " says the buyer ;
But when he has gone his way, then he boasts.

15 There is gold and abundance of pearls ;
But the lips of knowledge are the precious casket.

16 Take his garment who is surety for another;
Yea, take a pledge of him who is bound for a stranger.

17 The bread of falsehood is sweet to a man;
But afterwards his mouth is filled with gravel.

18 Purposes are established by counsel;
Therefore with good advice make war.

19 He who goes about as a tale-bearer reveals secrets;
Therefore associate not with him who keeps open his lips.

20 Whoso curses his father or his mother,
His lamp shall be put out in midnight darkness.

21 A possession, gotten hastily at the first,
In the end shall not be blessed.

22 Say not thou, "I will repay evil";
Wait on Jehovah, and he will help thee.

23 Divers weights are an abomination to Jehovah,
And a false balance is not good.

24 A man's steps are from Jehovah;
How, then, can a man understand his way?

25 It is a snare to a man rashly to utter what is holy,
And after vows to consider.

26 A wise king scatters the wicked like chaff,
And brings over them the wheel [of the thrashing-wain].

27 The spirit of a man is the lamp of Jehovah,
Which searches all the chambers of the body.

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king;
Yea, his throne is upholden by mercy.

29 The glory of young men is their strength,
And the beauty of old men is the gray head.

30 The scars of a wound are a cleansing from evil;
Yea, the stripes which reach to the chambers of the body.

1 As streams of water,
So is the heart of the king in the hand of Jehovah;
He turns it whithersoever he will.

2 All the ways of a man are right in his own eyes;
But Jehovah weighs the heart.

3 To do justice and equity
Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice.

4 The lofty look, the proud heart,
Yea, the splendor of the wicked, is ruin.

5 The plans of the active tend only to plenteousness;
But the hasty hastens only to want.

6 The getting of treasures by a false tongue
Is the scattered breath of them that seek death.

7 The rapine of the wicked shall snatch them away,
Because they refuse to do justice.

8 The way of the guilty man is crooked;
But he that is pure, his doings are right.

9 Better is it to dwell in a corner of the housetop
Than with a brawling woman in a large house.

10 The soul of the wicked longs to do evil;
His neighbour finds no favor in his eyes.

11 When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise;
When one instructs the wise man, he receives knowledge.

12 The righteous man has regard to the house of the wicked;
He causes the wicked to fall into ruin.

13 Whoso stops his ears at the cry of the poor,
He also shall cry aloud, but shall not be heard.

14 A gift offered in secret pacifies anger;
Yea, a present, put into the bosom, strong wrath.

15 It is joy to the righteous man to do what is right;
But destruction is for them that do iniquity.

16 The man who wanders from the way of understanding
Shall rest in the assembly of the dead.

17 He that loves pleasure will be a poor man;
He that loves wine and oil will not be rich.

18 The wicked man shall be a ransom for the righteous;
Yea, the transgressor shall suffer instead of the upright.

19 It is better to dwell in a desert land
Than with a contentious and fretful woman.

20 Precious treasure and oil are in the dwelling of the wise;
But the foolish man swallows them up.

21 He who follows after righteousness and mercy
Shall find life, righteousness, and honor.

22 A wise man scales the city of the mighty,
And brings down the strength in which it trusted.

23 Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue
Keeps his soul from trouble.

24 The proud and haughty, scoffer is his name;
He acts with excess of insolence.

25 The wishes of the slothful man are the death of him,
Because his hands refuse to labor.

26 All the day long the covetous man is craving;
But the righteous man gives, and withholds not.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination;
How much more when he brings it with an evil design!

28 A false witness shall perish;
But the man that hears shall always speak.

29 The wicked man hardens his face;
But the upright directs his way.

30 Wisdom is nothing, and understanding is nothing,
And devices are nothing, against Jehovah.

31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle;
But victory is from Jehovah.

1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches;
And better is good-will than silver and gold.

2 The rich and the poor meet together;
Jehovah is the Maker of them all.

3 The prudent man sees the evil, and hides himself;
But the simple pass on, and are punished.

4 By humility and the fear of Jehovah
Are riches, and honor, and life.

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the deceitful;
He that will preserve his life will be far from them.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

7 The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower is servant to the lender.

8 He who sows iniquity shall reap calamity,
And the rod of his punishment is prepared.

9 He who has a bountiful eye shall be blessed;
Because he gives of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scoffer, and contention will go out;
Yea, strife and reproach will cease.

11 He who loves purity of heart,
Grace is upon his lips, and the king will be his friend.

12 The eyes of Jehovah watch over knowledge;
But he overthrows the words of the treacherous.

13 The slothful man man says, " There is a lion without;
I shall be slain in the streets."

14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit;
He, with whom Jehovah is angry, shall fall therein.

15 Folly is bound to the heart of a child;
But the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

16 He that oppresses the poor to increase his wealth,
And he that gives to the rich, shall surely come to want.

XIII.

Other Proverbs. — CH. XXII. 17 – XXIV. 22.

17 INCLINE thine ear and hear the words of the wise,
And give heed to my instruction!
18 For it will be a pleasant thing, if thou keep them in thy bosom,
If they all be established upon thy lips.
19 That thy trust may be in Jehovah,
I have this day given to thee instruction, yea, to thee.
20 Behold, I have written to thee excellent things,
Concerning conduct and knowledge;
21 That I might make thee know rectitude, and words of truth,
That thou mayst bring back words of truth to them that send thee.

22 Rob not the poor man, because he is poor,
Nor crush thou the destitute at the gate;
23 For Jehovah will maintain their cause,
And spoil of life those that spoiled them.

24 Make no friendship with a passionate man,
Nor associate with a man prone to wrath;
25 Lest thou learn his ways,
And take to thyself a snare.

26 Be not thou one of those who strike hands, —
Of those who are sureties for debts.
27 When thou hast nothing with which to pay,
Why should thy bed be taken from under thee?

28 Remove not the ancient landmark,
Which thy fathers have made.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business?
He shall be the minister of kings;
He shall not serve obscure persons.

1 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider well in whose presence thou art;
2 And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou art a man given to appetite!
3 Long not for his dainties,
For they are deceitful meat.

4 Toil not to become rich;
Cease from this, thy wisdom.
5 Wilt thou let thine eyes pursue that which is not?
For riches make to themselves wings;
They fly away like the eagle toward heaven.

6 Eat not the bread of him that has an evil eye,
Nor long for his dainties;
7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.
"Eat and drink!" says he to thee;
But his heart is not with thee.
8 The morsel, which thou hast eaten, thou shalt vomit up,
And thou wilt have thrown away thy pleasant words.

9 Speak not in the ears of a fool;
For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

10 Remove not the ancient landmark,
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless!
11 For their avenger is mighty;
He will maintain their cause against thee.

12 Apply thy heart to instruction,
And thine ears to the words of knowledge.

13 Withhold not correction from a child;
If thou beat him with the rod, he will not die.
14 Do thou beat him with the rod,
And thou shalt rescue him from the under-world.

15 My son, if thy heart be wise,
My heart shall rejoice, even mine;
16 Yea, my reins shall exult,
When thy lips speak right things.

17 Let not thy heart envy sinners,
But continue thou in the fear of Jehovah all the day long;
18 For surely there shall be a reward,
And thine expectation shall not be cut off.

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thy heart in the right way!
20 Be not thou among winebibbers,
Among those who are prodigal of their flesh;
21 For the drunkard and the prodigal shall come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

22 Hearken to thy father, who begat thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old.

23 Buy truth, and sell it not;
Buy wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of a righteous man shall greatly rejoice;
Yea, he who begets a wise child shall have joy in him.
25 Let thy father and thy mother have joy;
Yea, let her that bore thee rejoice.

26 My son, give me thy heart,
And let thine eyes observe my ways!

27 For a harlot is a deep pit;
Yea, a strange woman is a narrow well.
28 She lies in wait also like a robber,
And gathers the faithless among men.

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions? Who has anxiety?
Who has wounds without cause? Who has dimness of eyes?
30 They that tarry long at the wine;
They that go about to seek mixed wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it goes down smoothly.
32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like an adder.
33 Thine eyes will look upon strange women,
And thy heart will utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as one that lies down in the midst of the sea,
And as one that lies down upon the top of a mast.
35 "They have stricken me, — I suffered no pain!
They have beaten me, — I felt it not!
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

1 Be not thou envious of wicked men,
And desire not to be with them!
2 For their heart studies destruction,
And their lips talk of mischief.

3 Through wisdom is a house builded,
And by understanding is it established;
4 Yea, by knowledge are the chambers filled
With all precious and goodly substance.

5 The wise man is strong;
Yea, the man of understanding establishes his strength.
6 For by wise counsel shalt thou make war,
And by the multitude of counsellors comes success.

7 Wisdom is too high for the fool;
He opens not his mouth at the gate.

8 He that devises to do evil
Shall be called a mischief-maker.

9 The purpose of folly is sin;
But the scoffer is an abomination to men.

10 If thy spirit faint in the day of adversity,
Faint will be thy strength.

11 To deliver those that are dragged to death,
Those that totter to the slaughter,
Spare thyself not!
12 If thou sayst, "Behold, we knew it not!"
Doth not he that weighs the heart observe it?
Yea, he that keeps thy soul knows it,
And he will render to every man according to his works.

13 Eat honey, my son, for it is good,
And the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste;
14 So learn thou wisdom for thy soul!
When thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward,
And thy expectation shall not be cut off.

15 Plot not, O wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous;
Spoil not his resting-place!
16 For though the righteous fall seven times, yet shall he rise up again;
But the wicked shall fall into mischief.

17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falls,
And let not thy heart be glad when he stumbles,
18 Lest Jehovah see, and it displease him,
And he turn away his anger from him.

19 Fret not thyself on account of evil men,
Neither be thou envious of the wicked;
20 For there shall be no reward for the evil man;
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

21 My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king,
And associate not with them that are given to change!
22 For their calamity shall rise up suddenly,
And their ruin, proceeding from both, in a moment.

XIV.

Other Proverbs. — Ch. xxiv. 23–34.

23 These also are words of the wise.

It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.
24 They that say to the wicked, "Thou art righteous,"
Them shall the people curse;
Nations shall abhor them.
25 But it shall be well with them that punish him,
And the blessing of prosperity shall come upon them.

26 He that gives a right answer
Kisses the lips.

27 Arrange thy work without,
And prepare it in thy field, —
Afterwards thou mayst build thy house.

28 Be not a witness, without cause, against thy neighbour,
And deceive not with thy lips.

29 Say not, "As he hath done to me,
So will I do to him;
I will render to the man according to his doings."

30 I passed by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,
31 And lo, it was all overgrown with thorns,
And the face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
32 Then I saw, and considered it well;
I looked upon it, and received instruction.
33 "A little sleep, a little slumber!
A little folding of the hands to rest!"
34 So shall poverty come upon thee like a highwayman;
Yea, want like an armed man.

XV.

Other Proverbs. — Ch. xxv.–xxix.

1 These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, collected.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing;
But it is the glory of kings to search out a matter.

3 As the heavens for their height,
And as the earth for its depth,
So is the heart of kings unsearchable!

4 Take away the dross from the silver,
And there will come forth a vessel for the founder.
5 Take away the wicked man from the presence of the king,
And his throne will be established by righteousness.

6 Put not thyself forth in the presence of the king,
Nor station thyself in the place of great men;
7 For better is it that one should say to thee,
"Come up hither!"
Than that he should put thee in a lower place,
In the presence of the prince, whom thine eyes behold.

8 Go not forth hastily to engage in a suit,
Lest thou know not what to do in the end of it,
When thine adversary hath put thee to shame.

9 Maintain thy cause with thine adversary,
But reveal not another's secret;
10 Lest he that hears it put thee to shame,
And thy infamy depart not from thee.

11 A word spoken in season
Is like apples of gold with figures of silver.

12 As a ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
So is a wise reprover to an attentive ear.

13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him;
For he refreshes the spirits of his masters.

14 As clouds and wind without rain,
So is the man that falsely boasts of giving.

15 By long forbearing is a prince appeased;
And a soft tongue breaks bones.

16 Hast thou found honey? eat what is sufficient for thee,
Lest thou be surfeited with it, and vomit it up.
17 Let thy foot be seldom in the house of thy friend,
Lest he be surfeited with thee and hate thee.

18 A battle-hammer, and a sword, and a sharp arrow,
Is the man who bears false witness against his neighbour.

19 As a broken tooth, and a wavering foot,
So is trust in an unfaithful man in time of trouble.

20 As he that takes off a garment on a cold day,
As vinegar upon nitre,
So is he that sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;
22 For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head,
And Jehovah will reward thee.

23 As the north wind brings forth rain,
So a backbiting tongue makes an angry countenance.

24 Better is it to dwell in a corner of the house-top,
Than with a quarrelsome woman in a large house.

25 As cold water to the thirsty,
So is good news from a far country.

26 As a troubled fountain, and as a corrupted spring,
So is a righteous man falling before the wicked.

27 To eat much honey is not good;
So the search of high things is weariness.

28 As a city broken through and without a wall,
So is he that has no rule over his spirit.

1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,
So honor is not becoming to a fool.

2 As the sparrow wanders, and the swallow flies away,
So the curse, uttered without cause, shall not come.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the back of the fool.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also become like to him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
That he may not think himself wise.

6 He that has his feet cut off drinks damage;
So is he who sends a message by the hand of a fool.

7 The legs of a lame man hang loose;
So is it with a proverb in the mouth of fools.

8 As he that puts a purse of gems upon a heap of stones,
So is he that gives honor to a fool.

9 As a thorn taken up by the hand of a drunkard,
So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

10 A master brings every thing to pass;
But he who hires fools hires wayfarers.

11 As a dog returns to that which he has vomited,
So a fool repeats his folly.

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?
There is more hope of a fool than of him.

13 The slothful man says, "There is a lion in the way;
There is a lion in the streets."

14 As a door turns upon its hinges,
So does the slothful upon his bed.
15 The slothful man dips his hand into the dish;
It grieves him to bring it again to his mouth.
16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit
Than seven men who can render a reason.

17 As one that takes a dog by the ears,
So is he that passing by becomes enraged on account of
the quarrel of another.

18 As a madman
Who casts about darts, arrows, and death,
19 So is the man who deceives his neighbour,
And says, "Was I not in sport?"

20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;
So where there is no talebearer, contention ceases.

21 As coal is for heat, and as wood for fire,
So is a contentious man for kindling strife.

22 The words of a talebearer are like dainties;
For they go down to the innermost parts of the body.

23 As drossy silver overlaying an earthen vessel,
So are warm lips with an evil heart.

24 An enemy dissembles with his lips,
And lays up deceit within him.
25 When he speaks fair, believe him not!
For there are seven abominations in his heart.
26 His hatred is covered by deceit;
His wickedness shall be revealed before the great assembly.

27 He that digs a pit shall fall therein;
And he that rolls a stone, it shall return upon him.

28 A lying tongue hates those whom it wounds,
And a flattering mouth works ruin.

1 Boast not thyself of to-morrow,
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth !

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ;
A stranger, and not thine own lips.

3 Stone is heavy and sand weighty ;
But a fool's wrath is heavier than both.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger impetuous ;
But who is able to stand before jealousy ?

5 Better is open rebuke
Than love kept concealed.
6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend ;
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

7 He who is fed to the full tramples on the honeycomb ;
But to the hungry any bitter thing is sweet.

8 As a bird that wanders from its nest,
So is a man who wanders from his dwelling-place.

9 Oil and perfume gladden the heart ;
Sweet, too, is a man's friend by hearty counsel.

10 Thy friend and thy father's friend forsake not,
And go not into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity.
Better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother far off.

11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,
That I may give an answer to him that reproaches me.

12 A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself;
The simple pass on, and are punished.

13 Take his garment who is surety for another;
Yea, take a pledge of him who is bound for a stranger.

14 He who blesses his neighbour with a loud voice, rising early for it,
To him it shall be accounted a curse.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day
And a quarrelsome wife are alike.
16 He who can restrain her may restrain the wind,
And conceal the oil upon his right hand, which proclaims itself.

17 Iron sharpens iron;
So one man sharpens the face of another.

18 He that watches the fig-tree shall eat its fruit;
So he that is careful for his master shall come to honor.

19 As in water face answers to face,
So does the heart of man to man.

20 The regions of the dead are never full;
So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 The refining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold;
So let a man be to the mouth that gives him praise.

22 Though thou shouldst beat a fool in a mortar,
Among bruised wheat, with a pestle,
Yet will not his folly depart from him.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
And look well to thy herds!

24 For riches last not for ever;
Does even the crown endure from generation to generation?
25 The hay disappears, and the tender grass shows itself,
And the herbage of the mountains is gathered in.
26 The lambs are thy clothing,
And the goats the price of thy field.
27 There is goat's milk enough for thy food,
For the food of thy household,
And for the sustenance of thy maidens.

1 The wicked flee when no man pursues;
But the righteous is as bold as a lion.

2 Through the rebellion of a land many are its rulers;
But through men of prudence and understanding it shall long endure.

3 A poor man who oppresses the needy
Is a sweeping rain which leaves no food.

4 They who forsake the law praise the wicked;
But they who keep the law contend with them.

5 Wicked men understand not equity;
But they who seek Jehovah understand all things.

6 Better is a poor man who walks in uprightness,
Than he who is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

7 He that keeps the law is a wise son;
But he that is the companion of prodigals brings shame on his father.

8 He that increases his substance by usurious gain
Gathers it for him who is kind to the poor.

9 He that turns away his ear from hearing the law,
Even his prayer is an abomination.

10 He that causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way
Shall himself fall into his own pit;
But the upright shall have good things in possession.

11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit;
But the poor man, who has understanding, searches him through.

12 When the righteous rejoice, there is great splendor;
But when the wicked are exalted, men hide themselves.

13 He that covers his sins shall not prosper;
But he that confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.

14 Happy the man who fears always!
But he who hardens his heart shall fall into mischief.

15 As a roaring lion and a hungry bear,
So is a wicked ruler over a needy people.

16 The prince that is weak in understanding is great in oppression;
But he that hates unjust gain shall prolong his days.

17 A man borne down by the blood of a person
Must flee even to the pit, that he may not be taken.

18 He who walks uprightly shall be safe;
But he who is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

19 He who tills his land shall have bread enough;
And he that follows after worthless persons shall have poverty enough.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings ;
But he that makes haste to be rich shall not go unpunished.

21 To have respect to persons is not good ;
Since for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

22 He that has an evil eye hastes after wealth,
And considers not that poverty will come upon him.

23 He, who rebukes a man, afterwards finds more favor
Than he who flatters with his tongue.

24 Whoso steals from his father or his mother,
And says, "It is no transgression,"
He is the companion of a robber.

25 He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife ;
But he that puts his trust in Jehovah shall be rich.

26 He who trusts in his own understanding is a fool ;
But he who walks wisely shall be delivered.

27 He who gives to the poor shall not want ;
But he that shuts his eyes shall have many a curse.

28 When the wicked are exalted, men hide themselves ;
But when they perish, the righteous increase.

1 He, who being often reproved hardens his neck,
Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice ;
But when the wicked bears rule, the people mourn.

3 He that loves wisdom rejoices his father ;
But he who is a companion of harlots destroys his substance.

4 A king establishes a land by equity ;
But he who receives gifts overthrows it.

5 A man who flatters his neighbour
Spreads a net for his feet.

6 In the transgression of a wicked man there is a snare ;
But the righteous shall sing and rejoice.

7 A righteous man cares for the cause of the poor ;
A wicked man discerns not knowledge.

8 Scoffers kindle a city into a flame ;
But wise men turn away wrath.

9 If a wise man argue with a fool,
Whether he frown or laugh, there will be no rest.

10 The bloodthirsty man hates the upright ;
But the righteous seek to preserve his life.

11 A fool lets all his anger come out ;
But a wise man keeps it back.

12 If a ruler listen to falsehood,
All his servants are wicked.

13 The poor man and the oppressor meet together ;
Jehovah enlightens the eyes of them both.

14 The king that judges the poor with uprightness,
His throne shall be established for ever.

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom ;
But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked are in authority, transgression increases ;
But the righteous shall see their fall.

17 Chastise thy son, and he will give thee rest;
Yea, he will give delight to thy soul.

18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint;
But happy the people that keeps the law.

19 A servant will not be corrected by words;
For, though he understand, he will not obey.

20 Seest thou a man who is hasty in his words?
There is more hope of a fool than of him.

21 He that delicately brings up his servant from childhood
Shall have him become a son at the last.

22 An angry man stirs up strife,
And a passionate man abounds in transgression.

23 A man's pride will bring him down;
But he that is of a humble spirit shall attain to honor.

24 He who shares with a thief hates himself;
He hears the curse, but makes no discovery.

25 The fear of man brings a snare;
But whoso puts his trust in Jehovah shall be safe.

26 Many are they who seek the ruler's favor;
But every man's judgment comes from Jehovah.

27 As the unjust man is an abomination to the just,
So the upright in his way is an abomination to the wicked.

XVI.

The words of Agur.—Ch. xxx.

1 The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, even his sayings.
The solemn declaration of the man to Ithiel, even to Ithiel and Ucal.

2 Truly I am more stupid than any man;
There is not in me the understanding of a man.
3 I have not learned wisdom,
Nor have I the knowledge of the Most Holy.
4 Who has gone up into heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has bound up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what his son's name, if thou knowest?

5 Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to them that put their trust in him.
6 Add not to his words,
Lest he rebuke thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 Two things do I ask of thee;
Withhold them not from me, while I live!
8 Remove far from me falsehood and lies;
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Feed me with the food which is needful for me;
9 Lest I be full, and deny thee,
And say, "Who is Jehovah?"
Or lest I be poor, and steal,
And swear falsely by the name of my God.

10 Talk not against a servant to his master,
Lest he curse thee, and thou suffer for it.

11 There is a class of men that curse their fathers,
And do not bless their mothers.
12 There is a class who are pure in their own eyes,
And yet are not washed from their filthiness.
13 There is a class, — how lofty are their eyes,
And their eyelids are lifted up !
14 There is a class, whose teeth are swords,
And their jaw-teeth knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth,
And the needy from among men.

15 The horseleech has two daughters ;
"Give !" "Give !" [is their name.]

There are three things which are never satisfied !
Yea, four which say not, " Enough ! "
16 The under-world, and the barren womb ;
The earth, which is not satiated with water ;
And fire, which doth not say, " It is enough ! "

17 The eye that mocks at a father,
And scorns to obey a mother,
The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
And the young eagles shall eat it.

18 These three things are too wonderful for me ;
Yea, there are four which I understand not :
19 The track of an eagle in the air,
The track of a serpent upon a rock,
The track of a ship in the midst of the sea,
And the track of a man with a maid.
20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman ;
She eats, and wipes her mouth,
And says, " I have not committed wickedness."

21 Under three things is the earth disquieted;
Yea, under four it cannot bear up:
22 Under a servant when he becomes a king,
And a fool when he is filled with bread;
23 Under an odious woman when she becomes a wife,
And a handmaid when she becomes heir to her mistress.

24 There are four things which are small upon the earth,
Yet are they wise, instructed in wisdom.
25 The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they prepare in the summer their food.
26 The jerboas are a feeble people,
Yet do they make their houses in the rocks.
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet do they all go forth in bands.
28 The lizard seizes with its hands,
And is in king's palaces.

29 These three have a graceful step,
Yea, four are graceful in their walk:
30 The lion, the hero among beasts,
Which turns not back for any;
31 The loin-girded war-horse, the he-goat,
And a king in the midst of his people.

32 If thou hast been foolish in lifting thyself up,
And hast meditated evil,
Put thy hand on thy mouth!
33 For, as the pressing of milk brings forth cheese,
And as the pressing of the nose brings forth blood,
So the pressing of anger brings forth strife.

XVII.

Advice given to a king. — Ch. xxxi. 1 – 9.

1 The words given to King Lemuel; the sayings which his mother taught him.

2 What, O my son, and what, O son of my womb,
Yea, what, O son of my vows, [shall I say to thee]?
3 Give not thy strength to women,
Nor thy ways to that which destroys kings!
4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes to desire strong drink;
5 Lest they drink, and forget the law,
And pervert the rights of any of the afflicted.
6 Give strong drink to him who is ready to perish,
And wine to him that has a heavy heart;
7 Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more!

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb,
In the cause of all orphans!
9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously,
And maintain the cause of the poor and needy!

XVIII.

Character of a good wife. — Ch. xxxi. 10-31.

10 Who can find a good wife?
Her worth is far above pearls.
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
And he is in no want of gain.
12 She does him good, and not evil,
All the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
And works willingly with her hands.
14 She is like the merchants' ships;
She brings her food from afar.
15 She rises while it is yet night,
And gives food to her family,
And a task to her maidens.
16 She lays a plan for a field, and buys it;
With the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds her loins with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
18 She perceives how pleasant is her gain,
And her lamp is not extinguished in the night.
19 She puts forth her hands to the distaff,
And her hands take hold of the spindle.
20 She spreads out her hand to the poor,
Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.
21 She has no fear for her household on account of the snow,
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
22 She makes for herself coverlets;
Her clothing is of fine cotton and purple.
23 Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits with the elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them,
And delivers girdles to the merchant.
25 Strength and honor are her clothing ;
And she laughs at the days to come.
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And kind instruction is upon her tongue.
27 She looks well to the ways of her household,
And eats not the bread of idleness.
28 Her children rise up and extol her ;
Her husband, and praises her, [saying,]
29 " Many daughters have done virtuously,
But thou excellest them all."
30 Grace is deceitful, and beauty vain ;
But the woman that fears Jehovah, she shall be praised.
31 Give ye her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her works praise her in the gates.

ECCLESIASTES.

INTRODUCTION.

Few books of the Old Testament have given rise to greater diversities of opinion than that which is called Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher. In regard to its form and its spirit, its subject and its meaning, its scope and design, its age and author, widely different opinions have been entertained, and defended with confidence and ingenuity. By different critics the author has been regarded as an Epicurean, a Sadducee, a skeptic, a fatalist. By others his chief aim is supposed to be to prove and maintain the doctrines of the immortality of the human soul, and a future state of retribution. Some of the ancient Jews, according to St. Jerome, entertained objections against this book, saying, that, "as some books, which Solomon wrote, had been lost, this too ought to be obliterated; because it asserted that the creatures of God are vain, and regarded all things as worthless, and preferred meat and drink and delicacies to every thing else; yet they said that the twelfth chapter alone, which summed up all he had written in the precept to fear God and keep his commandments, gave it a sufficient claim to be placed among the sacred books."* So in the Talmud we read, "Some of the wise men desired *to hide*, לְגִנוֹז, that is, to forbid the public reading of, the book Koheleth, because there were found in it words tending to heresy."† Others, because his language was contradictory.

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* See Comment. on Eccles. xii. 13, Jerome's Works, Vol. II., p. 787, edit. Martianay.

† See Pesikta Rabbati, fol. 33, c. 1; Midrash, Cohel., fol. 311, c. 1; Vajikra Rab., § 28, fol. 161, c. 2; Tr. Schabb., fol. 30, c. 2.

A consideration of the objections which have been made to the book in ancient and modern times, and of the apparent contradictions which perplex the reader, seems to be demanded as a part of the introduction to this book.

In regard to the class of composition to which the book belongs, it seems to come nearest to what in modern times would be called an ethical or moral essay. I do not, with some writers, regard it as a poem, though parts of it run into the region of poetry, and have a degree of rhythm in the construction. It is, however, written with the freedom of poetry, without regard to logical connection of thought, and without any strict and regular plan, kept in view throughout. Not that the work is wholly destitute of method. There is, at any rate, a unity of subject pervading it from beginning to end; interrupted, it is true, but not destroyed, by digressions and the introduction of moral maxims. The author evidently throws out freely the thoughts which occur to him on a general subject, rather than undertakes to prove any particular point, or to accomplish any precise plan, to which all the parts should have a definite and intimate relation.

If I were to express the subject of the work in a single sentence, which might serve as a title-page to it, I should call it, "THOUGHTS ON THE VANITY OF HUMAN LIFE, INTERSPERSED WITH SUCH MAXIMS OF PRUDENCE, VIRTUE, AND RELIGION, AS WILL HELP A MAN TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT." The main doctrine, or speculative view, of the author is the vanity of human things, that is, of human striving, and of human fortunes and experiences; and his most prominent practical precept is, that men should enjoy the present blessings of life as they come, without anxiety and over-strenuous exertions, relating to distant and future good. But there are many observations, and many practical precepts of prudence, virtue, and religion, scattered through the work, as having an independent value, and not having a particular relation to any general plan or design of the author.

In regard to the objectionable sentiments and inconsistencies which have been charged upon the Preacher, it appears to me that much may be said in the way of explanation. One general consideration is, the general character of the composition, which does not aim at metaphysical accuracy of expression, or precise statements of doctrine or principles. The writer throws out thoughts and views, which occur to him as the results of his various experience, without making at the time the limitations and qualifications which a more careful and logical writer would have placed in immediate connection with the former. We are not, therefore, to take all the thoughts which he expresses, while contemplating things in certain points of view, as his final and settled convictions. We are to consider whether, in the course of his essay, he has not limited, or modified, former statements, if not formally and expressly, yet by solemn additional declarations, which in fact modify the former; whether, in the one case, he has not told us what he thought when considering things under certain aspects, and, in the other, what he believed on the whole, and taking all circumstances into the account; whether, in the one case, he has not been stating facts which perplexed his mind, and, in the other, expressed his habitual faith, to which he clung notwithstanding these facts. It is very doubtful, however, whether he intends to contradict, or has in fact contradicted, any one proposition which he has laid down, in the same sense in which he asserted it.

It is probable that nothing advanced by the Preacher has given greater occasion for the charge of inconsistency or contradiction, than the sentiments which he expresses in relation to a retribution for sin. The difficulty occasioned by his statements in relation to this subject is the greater, if, as seems to be most probable, he had not attained to faith in a life after death, or a future state of retribution. The doctrine of a retribution after death affords the easy solution of the difficulty, which satisfies most readers. But if the writer did not believe in the doctrine, we need a different explanation of the facts. Some of the passages relating to this subject are the following:—In ch. viii. 14, 15, the Preacher says, "There is a vanity which takes place upon the earth, that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, and that there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said, This also is vanity. Then I commended joy; because nothing is good for a man, except to eat, and to drink, and to be joyful; for it is this that abides with him for his labor during the days of his life which God gives him under the sun." So, ch. ix. 2-5, "All things [happen to the righteous] as to all. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrifices, and to him that sacrifices not; as is the good, so is the sinner; he that swears [falsely], as he that fears an oath. This is an evil among all things which take place under the sun, that there is one event to all; therefore also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and afterward they go down to the dead. For who is there that is excepted? With all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they must die; but the dead know not any thing, and there is no more to them any advantage; for their memory is forgotten. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart." Other passages of similar import might be quoted, but these are sufficient.

On the other hand, we read, in ch. iii. 17, "Then I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked. For there shall be a time for every employment and for every work [to be judged]." And in ch. viii. 12, 13, "But though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and have his days prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked; he shall be like a shadow, and shall not prolong his days; because he fears not before God." And in ch. xi. 9, "Know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And in ch. xii. 14, "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." See, also, ch. v. 3–7; vii. 17, 18; viii. 8.

Now the first remark, which may be made upon these seeming inconsistencies respecting the doctrine of retribution for sin is, that they are not peculiar to the book of Ecclesiastes. We find similar representations in the Psalms, in the book of Job, and in Habakkuk. See Ps. lxxiii.; Hab. i. 12–17. The book of Job contains strong representations of the prosperity of the wicked and the misery of the righteous; which representations the writer reconciles with faith in a righteous retribution for sin, and that, too, in the present world. That these representations are generally put into the mouths of different speakers is a mere matter of form, adopted by the author in order to present different views of the subject. But this is not always the case. Job himself is made to utter sentiments apparently so diverse in chapters xxiv. and xxvii., that some critics have made arbitrary alterations in the text to meet the supposed difficulty. It is probable, therefore, that the alleged inconsistency in the case of the Preacher is to be explained in the same way as the passages referred to in the Psalms, Job, and Habakkuk.

2. It is to be remarked, that the facts asserted by the Preacher are, to a considerable extent at least, what we all know to be true. Physical events do take place according to physical laws. The sun rises on the evil and the good, and the rain descends on the just and the unjust. When a tempest rages, it does not spare the fields and dwellings of the righteous. When the pestilence lays waste, it does not pass by the innocent and devout. If there be any exaggeration in the Preacher's statements, if he places the difficulties which occur to his mind respecting the moral government of God in a very strong light, this is to be referred to the bold, unqualified way in which he expresses all his thoughts, and to his desire to give a striking illustration of the vanity of human things. He does not make his statements as deciding the question against a retribution for sin, but only as presenting difficulties. He is expressing thoughts which occurred to his mind at the time, not giving his view on the whole. He is complaining that the wicked escape for a long time, though he may yet have believed that judgment would at some time overtake them. Notwithstanding the extent to which all things happen alike to all, he may have believed in the doctrine of a righteous retribution, as established by the general consequences of human actions, as required by the justice of God, and as certainly contained in the religion of his nation.

For it will be conceded by all, that the doctrine of a righteous retribution in the present life is the doctrine of the Old Testament. It is found throughout the Pentateuch and the book of Proverbs. It was firmly held by the Psalmists, by Habakkuk, and the author of Job, notwithstanding the difficulties presented by the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous. Their faith in retribution was not shaken by their observation, that " The ungodly prospered in the world and increased in riches," while the righteous "have been smitten every day, and chastened every morning." They had faith, that, though "judgment against an evil work was not executed speedily," the wicked "stood in slippery places," and that in some way, and at some time, the ways of transgressors would be found to be hard, and that, too, in this world. Why, then, should we seek a solution of the difficulty in Ecclesiastes different from that which is applicable to other writers of the Old Testament? What more is necessary, than to suppose that in the one class of passages the Preacher states his faith, and the faith of his nation, in the doctrine of retribution, whilst in the other class he only states facts in regard to the temporary distribution of good and evil in the world, especially in regard to the occurrence of the same physical events to all without distinction of character, which, though they perplex his mind and occasion embarrassment, and impress it with the vanity of human things, yet do not shake his faith. In the one case, he declares what is true on the whole, in the long run, and all things considered, and what may be expected from the justice of the Almighty. In the other, he is stating what fell under his own observation and experience in a given time, and which occasioned him so much embarrassment, that he exclaims, "Then I saw the whole work of God, that a man cannot comprehend that which takes place under the sun; how much soever he may labor to search it out, yet shall he not comprehend it; yea, though a wise man resolve to know it, yet shall he not be able to comprehend it."

We Christians believe in the moral government of God, and in a retribution for sin to a certain extent in the present world, though we are sometimes inclined to wonder that a surer and a swifter punishment does not overtake evil-doers. We cannot deny the facts which the Preacher has stated, and which, at first view, seem inconsistent with his doctrines, however we might qualify the statement of them. We think we bring those facts into more perfect harmony with our faith in the moral government of God by extending the retributions of sin into the future world. The mind of the Preacher may have been more embarrassed than that of the Christian. It would be strange, if it were not. He may not have been so able to account for the phenomena of human life, as the Christian to whom life and immortality have been brought to light. But his faith was not shaken, though his understanding was perplexed. He admits, like an honest man, all the difficulties of the subject, and believes still, that, though for a time the sinner goes unpunished, yet that at some time, and in some way, he is brought into judgment.

It is true that the Preacher does not limit and qualify all his statements, like one who weighs all his words with the accuracy of Bishop Butler. It is rather his manner to give bold, unqualified, and, as it were, paradoxical statements of the results of his experience and observation, as well as of the course of conduct which he thinks it advisable to pursue. But if we make due allowance for the style of the writer in this respect, and for his use of figurative and hyperbolical language, we are not compelled to believe that he has contradicted himself, or that doubt on the subject of retribution was the prevailing habit of his mind.

It may appear singular to some readers that I have spent so much time on this topic, when the supposition, that the writer believed in a state of retribution after death, would afford so obvious a solution of the difficulty in question. But, in several notes on various passages in the book, I have given reasons which make it appear to my mind most probable that the Preacher had not faith in a future life, much less in a future state of retribution. It appears to me, that he has himself intimated that this was not the way in which he viewed the subject. Thus, in ch. viii. 13, he says, " But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he fears not before God." I think, too, that if he had had faith in the doctrine of a retribution after death, it would have pervaded the whole book, and given an entirely different complexion to it. The practical inferences, or recommendations, especially, which the Preacher makes in view of the vanity, perplexities, and shortness of life, would, it seems to me, have been entirely different, if he had entertained the Christian faith in immortality and retribution. See ch. ii. 24; iii. 12, 13, 22; v. 18 – 20; vii. 14; viii. 15; ix. 7 – 10, &c. I have already mentioned the probability, that no other solution of the difficulties in Ecclesiastes is to be sought, than that which applies to the book of Job, to Habakkuk, and to the Psalms.

With regard to the Preacher's alleged tendency to fatalism, it may be admitted that the sentiments of chapters first and second, and of such passages as ch. iii. 14, vi. 10, vii. 13, if taken by themselves, and pursued to their consequences, without regard to other statements and sentiments contained in the book, may seem to give some plausibility to the charge. But what author is not liable to the same charge, if treated in the same way? Would not the doctrine of our Saviour and of the Apostle Paul, respecting the dependence of all things upon God and the unlimited extent of the divine providence, be liable to the same charge? The Preacher has amply qualified his statements respecting the impotency of human exertion, and the inevitable course of events, and the dependence of all things upon God, by the doctrine of a righteous retribution, and by various passages, which imply faith in human freedom. In respect to this point, as to others, we must keep in mind the characteristic of the writer to give a strong, I might almost say paradoxical, view of the condition of human things, which is immediately before his mind. The necessary limitations and qualifications are not given at the time.

It may, however, be admitted, that the author gives a stronger view than any other Biblical writer of the circumscribed limits of human efforts, and their subjection to a higher, established, inevitable course of things, or ordination of divine providence, which man can neither resist nor control. See ch. iii. 1 – 15, especially 14, 15; vi. 10; vii. 13; ix. 1, 11. The great theme of the book, the vanity of human things, is made to consist chiefly of the vanity of human effort or striving, as being either wholly fruitless, or fruitless in relation to its express object. But if we interpret the language of the author by other parts of the book, we must come to the conclusion, that he by no means designs to encourage inactivity or neglect of our powers, but only an anxious, ambitious, and over-strenuous pursuit of future and distant good. If, in one passage, he asks, "What profit has a man of all his labor?" he says, in another, "Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might." However strong is the writer's representation of the influence of a higher power over his concerns and actions, he has enforced doctrines and duties which imply faith in human freedom and accountableness. Nor has any one a right to charge him with inconsistency, unless he is able to prove that the doctrines of the divine foreknowledge, providence, and government are inconsistent with human freedom and accountableness.

As to the opinion, that the author of Ecclesiastes was a Sadducee or skeptic, I know not what support it has, except in his want of faith in a future life. But this doctrine, it must be remembered, formed no part of the Jewish religion. In this respect, the Preacher does not differ essentially from the author of the book of Job, and other writers of the Old Testament. He lived, indeed, as is probable, at a later period, when the faith in the immortality of the soul may have begun to prevail; but he had had no authoritative assurance of it. As to the charge of Sadduceeism, it is at least inconsistent with the author's alleged tendency to fatalism. For the Sadducees, according to Josephus, "take away fate, and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal; but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly." *

As to the charge of Epicurism, if by this is meant that the Preacher recommends the pleasures of sense, or pleasures of any kind, without regard to the obligations of duty and religion, it appears to me that it is entirely false, as I shall show in the notes upon those passages which have been supposed to justify it. The foundation of this opinion is a too literal interpretation of certain figurative and pointed expressions, in which the author recommends a quiet enjoyment of the good one possesses, in contradistinction from excessive earnestness, anxiety, and exertion after distant and future good. The Preacher is careful to tell us that a man cannot have the quiet enjoyment of life, which he recommends, except by "the gift of God to those who are good in his sight," that is, who discharge the duties of morality and religion. Ch. ii. 26.

There are some other topics on which the Preacher has been

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* Whiston's Josephus, Antiq., xiii. 5, 9.

supposed to utter sentiments irreconcilable with each other, when he is, in fact, only giving the results of his various experience, and speaking of the subject in different relations. Thus, he often speaks in praise of wisdom, and of the advantages which it confers on its possessor; whilst, in other passages, he gives an impressive view of its insufficiency to guard its possessor from many of the calamities and trials which flesh is heir to. There is no inconsistency here. He also uses the word in different senses. When he says that "in much wisdom is much vexation, and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow," he is speaking of mere speculative knowledge; his meaning being, that, the more one knows of the world, the more he knows of its vanity, and that mere speculative knowledge cannot confer true satisfaction or happiness. In other passages, he commends that practical wisdom which enables its possessor to avoid the consequences of folly.

In order to explain the seeming inconsistencies which have been considered, the hypothesis has been advanced by some critics, such as Herder and Eichhorn, who were never at a loss for a hypothesis on any subject, that the book of Ecclesiastes consists of a dialogue, in which the speakers offer different sentiments on the subject under discussion. If our views are correct, such a hypothesis is unnecessary. But if the exigency for it were ten times greater than it is, the difficulty of dividing and arranging the book, so as to make it form a natural dialogue, is such, that the hypothesis must be regarded as forced and arbitrary in the highest degree. It has met with very little favor, and is too improbable to deserve a particular examination.

The great fault of the interpreters of this book has been that of ascribing to it more depth of thought, more logic, more method, greater definiteness of statement, and greater particularity of design, than really belong to it. The bold, indefinite, unprecise language of the author have given great opportunity to the commentators of attaching their thoughts to the writer's language, instead of extracting from it his own thoughts. Thus, Desvoeux, in his Commentary, makes the book contain a logical and well arranged argument to prove the immortality of the soul and a future state of retribution. Umbreit regards it as a philosophical inquiry relating to the *summum bonum*, or chief good.* Martin Luther says,—"The nature and design of this book is to teach us that we should with thankfulness enjoy present things, and the creatures which God has abundantly bestowed upon us, and not be anxious about the future; keeping a tranquil, quiet spirit, and a mind full of joy, being contented with the word and works of God."† Jahn coincides in opinion with Luther. "The author," says he, "does not dwell upon the vanity and vexatiousness of human affairs more than upon an agreeable use of the pleasures of life; and therefore his intention evidently was to repress the restless and eager efforts of men, which hurry them on in heaping up wealth, in securing pleasures and acquiring honors; and, at the same time, to instruct them not to increase the troubles of life by denying themselves the enjoyment of harmless, though uncertain and fleeting, pleasures."‡ On this view of Luther and Jahn, the remark may be made, that it is just to a certain extent. The practical design which they ascribe to the author was, without doubt, entertained by him; but whether it ought to be regarded as the chief and special design of the whole book may be doubted. On the contrary, the practical recommendation of the Preacher, as stated by Luther and Jahn, occurs in the book as an inference from the general subject which he undertook to illustrate.

Various other designs have been assigned to the author; among which is that of Kaiser, who supposes the work to be a historico-didactic poem, in which the characters of the Jewish kings, from Solomon to Zedekiah, are set forth and censured, so as to show what was the cause of the ruin of the Jewish nation.§ The chief objection to this theory is, that the author of the work has given no intimation, directly or indirectly, of any such design.

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* Koheleth Scepticus de summo bono. Commentatio philosophico-critica. Gotting. 1820.

† Pref. in Ecclesiastem, in Opp. Lat., edit. Wittenb., Tom. IV., p. 2.

‡ Jahn's Introd. to O. T., § 212.

§ Koheleth, das Collectivum der Davidischen Könige in Jerusalem, ein historisches Lehrgedicht über den Umsturtz des Judischen Staates. Erlangen. 1823.

There is also the theory of Ewald, who supposes the book to have been written when Palestine had become a province of Persia, and the Jews were suffering under the tyranny and violence of the Persian satraps. In this state of things, some of them had become weary of life and indifferent to all things; some plunged themselves into pleasures; and some openly inveighed against their oppressors, and thus exasperated their minds the more against them. In such times, says Ewald, the Preacher undertook to compose a book in which he exhorts his countrymen "to bear present evils with patience, to be cautious and circumspect in speech, and, above all, to fear God, who would at some time bring all things into judgment and set all things right. He exhorts them, therefore, not to sink under their calamities, but to enjoy with a grateful and cheerful mind the goods which had been placed within their reach."

The objection to this theory, too, is, that it is mere theory; that, even if the book was written in the circumstances of national distress which the writer supposes, of which, however, there is no evidence, there is no such necessary allusion to national affairs as this theory implies. There are no sentiments in the book which the vicissitudes of human life may not have led the author to express in any circumstances of the Jewish nation. A similar theory was proposed by Warburton, with reference to the book of Job, and with as little foundation.

The only proper way of coming at the truth in relation to this subject is to consider the author as having designed to do what he has actually done; not to ascribe to him any greater unity or speciality of purpose than appears in his work; not to make the thoughts on various topics, thrown off as they arose freely in the mind of the author and connected by casual associations, the parts of a logical argument, or the means of accomplishing a plan, which may never have existed in his mind.

If we gather the design of the author from what he has done, we must conclude that his purpose was to please, to instruct, and to improve his readers, by making known to them his thoughts on

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* In his remarks on Ecclesiastes, appended to his work, Das Hohelied Salomo's, übersetzt, &c. Götting. 1826.

the vanity of human life. The illustration of this topic is, and is regarded by the common reader, the prominent aim of the author. "Mere vanity, mere vanity, all is vanity," is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the essay. It is the chain which binds the whole together. And yet all parts of it do not conspire merely to illustrate this one topic. Throughout the work are interspersed advice and proverbial maxims respecting the conduct of life and the discharge of duty in relation to man and God. The author springs from one topic to another, to which he is drawn by some casual association, pursues the latter for a time, and then returns to the former. The vanity of human things being regarded as the main doctrinal view of the author, the general subject of the book, what Luther maintains to be its chief design may be regarded as his prominent practical inference, namely, that men should, in the discharge of duty, enjoy with gratitude the blessings of life as they come, without distressing anxiety and over-strenuous exertions after distant and future good. Yet the practice of virtue and the fear of God are enjoined as of the first importance in regard to the enjoyment of such happiness as may be attained in a world of vanity; and while the young and the old are encouraged to enjoy life as it passes, and to lose none of its pleasures through a spirit of asceticism, or of anxiety and ambition about the distant and the future, yet only such an enjoyment of the good things of life is recommended as is consistent with the constant remembrance of the Creator, and of the judgment which is appointed for all.

That the preceding account of the subject and design of the book is correct may appear from a more particular analysis of it, and from the commentary which follows it.

The principal thought is first laid down, that all is vain and unprofitable. Ch. i. 1, 2. This view the Preacher illustrates, —

1. By the wearisome, ever recurring changes which are taking place without bringing to pass any thing new, or leading to any new result, adapted to give satisfaction to the mind of man. Ver. 4 – 11.
2. By the dissatisfaction attending the pursuit of wisdom or knowledge. Ver. 12 – 18.

3. By the unsatisfactoriness of the pleasures of life and of strivings after them, even when united with the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy. Ch. ii. 1 – 11.

4. The author then compares the pleasures of knowledge and the pleasures of sense with one another, and passes judgment on them ; and recommends it as the best course which a man can pursue, in order to make the best of a vain world, to give up anxious cares about distant objects and perplexing subjects, and to enjoy with a tranquil, contented, cheerful mind the blessings of life, as he goes along in its paths. Ch. ii. 12 – 26.

5. The vanity of human things is illustrated by their established changes and periods, their fixed course, all things having their appointed limits and time. Hence the folly of anxiety, and the vanity of strenuous exertion, since man cannot alter the fixed and established course of things ; and hence the wisdom of taking things as they come, and making the best of them, in obedience and submission to the divine will. Ch. iii. 1 – 15.

6. The vanity of human things is illustrated by the prevalence of injustice and violence among men, and the resemblance of man to brutes in respect to hardships and death. Hence, too, the Preacher derives the conclusion, that it is best to take a cheerful enjoyment of the good things of life, without anxious cares respecting futurity. Ch. iii. 16 – 22.

7. The vanity of human things is next illustrated by reference to the sufferings of the oppressed; the envy which is excited toward the prosperous ; the evils of avarice and of solitude ; the evils attendant on royalty, arising from the infirmities of its possessor and the fickleness of the people. Ch. iv. Then follow some proverbial maxims respecting the worship of God, ch. v. 1 – 7 ; then proverbs recommending the quiet pursuit of agriculture, in preference to the agitating, avaricious pursuit of wealth, 8 – 17 ; these are followed by the advice before given, namely, to enjoy the good things of life as they come, without anxiety or wearisome efforts after distant and future good. 18 – 20.

8. The vanity of human things connected with wealth hoarded

up without being enjoyed or used, ch. vi. 1–6, and with insatiable desires. 7–9. Then follows an obscure passage, apparently intended to illustrate the vanity of human things. 10–12.

9. Then follows a series of maxims and precepts respecting the guidance, support, and consolation of men in their passage through life, recommending righteousness and piety, with occasional remarks on the vanity of human things, such as the vanity of striving after wisdom, the certainty of death, &c. Ch. vii. 1–viii. 13.

10. Then follows a new illustration of the vanity of human things, drawn from the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous, and the impossibility of comprehending the ways of Providence; closing with the practical exhortation, which he has given so many times before, to a quiet and cheerful enjoyment of life, while life lasts, as "his portion," as "all that abideth with him of his labor," without indulging in vain grief for what cannot be helped, or in the anxious, restless pursuit of that which cannot be attained, or which, when attained, yields no satisfaction. "Go thy way," says he, after giving the most melancholy picture of life which he has yet presented, "eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart; for now is God pleased with thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let not fragrant oil be wanting upon thy head. Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy vain life, which he has given thee under the sun all thy vain days." Ch. viii. 14–ix. 10.

11. A new illustration of the vanity of human life, drawn from the circumstances, that success does not always answer to a man's strength, wisdom, or other advantages; and that wisdom, with all its benefits to the public, often brings but little consideration to its possessor. Then follow various proverbial maxims, showing the advantages of wisdom and prudence, and the evil of rulers unfit for their station; and designed to regulate the conduct in private and public. This section closes with a recommendation of liberality to the poor, and of diligent exertion in our appropriate pursuits,

without an over-anxious solicitude respecting the issue of our labors. Ch. ix. 11 – xi. 6.

12. The Preacher now exhorts to a cheerful enjoyment of life as it passes, and the putting away of care and sorrow, in view of that portion of life's vanity which consists in the evil days of old age, and of the long period of darkness in prospect. Ch. xi. 7 – xii. 8. Then follows a repetition of the chief truth which has been illustrated in the work, namely, the vanity of human things; and the final recommendation of the Preacher, as the conclusion of the whole matter, and the whole business of man, namely, " to fear God and keep his commandments." Ch. xii. 9 – 14.

From this view of the contents of the book of Ecclesiastes it may be inferred that the author was a man of wisdom, virtue, and religion, according to the light which he had. He was not a fatalist, nor a skeptic, or Epicurean, in any offensive sense of those terms. If he had doubts, they related to subjects upon which he found no light in the religion of his fathers and his country. If he recommended the enjoyment of life, it was such an enjoyment as was consistent with virtue and religion. A deep sense of religion is evidently habitual to him, notwithstanding the difficulties which perplexed his understanding. He has a living faith in a wise and benevolent God, and a righteous government of the world, though the principles of this government are regarded by him as being beyond the comprehension of man.

On the other hand, it may be conceded that he has given a more melancholy view of human life than is consistent with the spirit of Christianity, or of a comprehensive philosophy. He had never heard the glad tidings of great joy to all people. The light of the Sun of Righteousness had not arisen upon his mind.

It may be admitted, too, that the subject of enjoyment occupied a more prominent place in the mind of the author than in the mind of Jesus Christ. A higher, more disinterested, more devoted spirit pervades the teachings of Him who spake as never man spake than we can find in any of the writings of the Old Testament. The Christian is taught to do his duty, and let enjoyment take care of itself. " Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," is the language of him who came to perfect the law. I do not mean that the book of Ecclesiastes contains any particular precept inconsistent with the Sermon on the Mount. But in respect to its tone, spirit, and the prominence it gives to certain topics, it must be allowed to be far behind it. A spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of others is certainly not so congenial to the mind of the author as to the mind of Christ.

Finally, if it be conceded that the Preacher expresses occasional doubts, where Paul or John would be rejoicing in hope and confidence, this should not lead us to give the ancient Hebrew philosopher the name of Sadducee, skeptic, or Epicurean, but rather to thank God, who has raised up Jesus to show us the nature and design of our present existence, and "to bring life and immortality to light."

Perhaps it may be well to say a few words on the authorship of Ecclesiastes, though in a work of this didactic character it is not a very important question. That by "the Preacher, the son of David," in ch. i. 1, is denoted Solomon, there can be no doubt. But this by no means proves that Solomon was the author of the composition; but only that the author, whoever he was, adopted the plan of introducing into the book one so celebrated throughout the East for wisdom and for prosperity as Solomon, for the purpose of giving weight to the sentiments which are put into his mouth. In adopting this plan, it is not probable that he intended to deceive his contemporaries, but only to make use of a literary fiction, such as is common in modern times; a fiction which is not very carefully supported. The prevalent belief, it is true, has been that Solomon was the author of the book. The first commentator, so far as I know, who called the received opinion in question, was the accomplished scholar and jurist, Hugo Grotius. "I think," says he, "the work is not a production of Solomon, but one written in the name of that king, as being led by repentance to the composition of it. It contains many words which cannot be found, except in Ezra, Daniel, and the Chaldee paraphrasts." In expressing his opinion, Grotius, with his usual sagacity, has mentioned by far the strongest argument in its support, namely, the characteristics of the language of Ecclesiastes, especially those which give it an Aramæan complexion. These are so scattered throughout the work, that it is sufficient to refer the Hebrew scholar to the whole Hebrew original. He cannot read the first chapter of it, without having strong doubts whether it was written by the principal author of the book of Proverbs.*

The book of Proverbs, if not wholly composed by Solomon, must be regarded, to a great extent, as his production, and undoubtedly belongs to his age, to the flourishing period of the Hebrew language and literature. But whoever will proceed from the perusal of the Proverbs of Solomon to that of the book of Ecclesiastes must receive from the diction of the latter a strong conviction that it is the production not only of a different author, but of a later age. In fact, there has been no greater opposition to this opinion than was to be expected from the natural prejudice in favor of the received tradition. The best scholars since the time of Grotius, who have given attention to the subject, have adopted his opinion. Even the Romanist, Jahn, who is very slow to adopt an opinion not in accordance with the tradition of the church, is unable to resist the evidence against the opinion that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes. Such critics as Dathe, Doederlein, Pareau, are of the same opinion. Dathe observes, that " Doederlein and Eichhorn have established their point by arguments so weighty, that none except very stubborn defenders of ancient traditions can deny it." †

Even Professor Stuart, in his recent work on the canon of the Old Testament (p. 139), admits, though the admission is hardly consistent with the general argument of his book, that " the diction of this book differs so widely from that of Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, that it is difficult to believe that both came from the same pen. Chaucer does not differ more from Pope, than Ecclesiastes from Proverbs. It appears to me, when I read Coheleth, that it presents one of those cases which leave no room for doubt, so striking and prominent is the discrepancy."

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* For an enumeration of the peculiarities of the language of Ecclesiastes, the critical reader is referred to De Wette's Introduction to the Old Testament, or to a still more complete view of them in Knobel's German Commentary, pp. 60 – 75.

† Jobus, Ecclesiastes, &c., a Dathio, p. 358.

Knobel, the author of the last, and perhaps the best, critical commentary on Ecclesiastes with which we are acquainted, says, — " No point in the criticism of the Old Testament is better established than that Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon, but in a later age." It ought to be mentioned, however, that there are those who maintain a different opinion. Whoever wishes to see the arguments on the other side of the question may find them well stated in a preliminary dissertation to Ecclesiastes by George Holden, London, 1822. They will not pass for much with those who are in the habit of weighing, rather than of counting, arguments.

There are also other considerations, which, though they may not be in the highest degree conclusive when standing alone, yet confirm the conclusion drawn from the diction of Ecclesiastes. It appears to me that the English reader may perceive, in the general style, character, and topics of the book, reasons for supposing that it came from a different author than that of the book of Proverbs. The style of the latter is concise, terse, elevated; that of the former is quite diffuse, vague, prosaic. The instruction of the one is preceptive and positive, having no reference to speculative doubts; that of the other is in the way of philosophic discussion, presenting the different aspects in which a subject may be viewed, and what is to be regarded as the truth, on the whole.

There are several topics, introduced into the book, which seem not very appropriate to the reign of Solomon, and which, if they had been so, that wise monarch might have been expected to pass over in silence. Among these are the complaints of the oppression of unjust rulers, ch. iii. 16, iv. 1, — of the extortions of provincial magistrates, ch. v. 8, — and of the elevation of inferior men to high stations, ch. x. 5 – 7. In fact, whenever the author speaks of kings and governors, he speaks in the tone of a subject rather than a king; of an observer, rather than of a holder, of kingly power. See iv. 13 – 16; v. 8, 9; viii. 2 – 5; ix. 13 – 18; x. 4 – 7, 16 – 20.

The fiction, according to which the sentiments of the book are put into the mouth of Solomon, is not well sustained, so that it appears to be only a fiction. If the book were written by Solomon, why does he say, "I *was* king." A living king would be more likely to say, "I, the king," &c. Why should Solomon say to his contemporaries that he was king *at Jerusalem*? Before the separation of the ten tribes, it was a superfluous expression. No one had been king in Samaria. Especially, why should he say that he had gained greater wisdom than *all* his predecessors at Jerusalem, ch. i. 16, when he had only one predecessor in that city, namely, David? All these expressions, however, might easily have escaped from an author not careful to maintain a literary fiction. In ch. i. 16, ii. 9, 15, 19, Solomon is represented as praising his own wisdom, and relating his own experience in a manner not very natural to a real, living person. Finally, the author, in ch. xii. 9, seems to drop the fiction, and speak of Solomon in the third person.

It is much more difficult to form a confident opinion as to the time when the book of Ecclesiastes was written than it is to decide that it belongs to a much later age than that of Solomon. From the Aramæan complexion of the language, from the religious and literary character of the book, and from its spirit and tone, as being suited to times of calamity and oppression, one may feel considerable confidence that it was written after the return of the Jews from the exile at Babylon; and there seems to be nothing to object to the prevalent opinion of the German critics, such as De Wette, Knobel, and Ewald, who date the composition of it near the fall of the Persian monarchy, or at the beginning of the Macedonian domination under Alexander; that is, about 330 years before the Christian era. The occurrence of two words of Persian origin, פִּתְגָם and פַּרְדֵּס, in ch. ii. 5, viii. 11, in connection with the arguments which have been mentioned for the late origin of the book, seems to favor this supposition. There are no reasons of any weight for supposing the canon of Scripture to have closed before this period. We are inclined, however, to adopt the date above mentioned, rather from the absence of more valid arguments in favor of any other opinion than from the conclusiveness of the reasons urged in its support. As to the opinion which has been advanced, that traces of an acquaintance with

Grecian philosophy are found in Ecclesiastes, we can only say that we have not been able to discern them.

Whoever wishes for a list of the commentators on Ecclesiastes will find one long enough to satisfy him in Rosenmüller's Introduction to this book. Of those which he has not mentioned, I have seen, " An Attempt to illustrate the Book of Ecclesiastes, by the Rev. George Holden, M. A., London, 1822"; "Uebersetzung des Koheleth nebst grammatisch exegetischem Commentar, von Moses Heinemann, Berlin, 1831"; and, "Commentar über das Buch Koheleth, von August Knobel, Leipzig, 1836." The present work, except what has been added in the way of revision, was completed several years ago; whereas it is only a few months since I have seen the work of Knobel. I was, therefore, pleased to find some of the opinions in which I differed from Rosenmüller and others supported by that unbiased and able critic.

ECCLESIASTES.

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.

2 Mere vanity, says the Preacher, mere vanity, all is
3 vanity. What profit has a man by all his labor with
4 which he wearies himself under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; while
5 the earth abides for ever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place whence it arose.
6 The wind goes toward the south, and turns about to the north; round and round goes the wind, and returns up-
7 on its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place whence the rivers come,
8 thither they return. All words become weary; man cannot express it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that has been, that will be; and that which has been done, that will be done; and there is no new
10 thing under the sun. Is there any thing of which a man may say, "Behold, this is new"? It has been long
11 ago, in the times which were before us. There is no remembrance of former things, and of things that are to come there shall be no remembrance to those who live afterwards.

12 I, the Preacher, was king over Israel at Jerusalem.
13 And I gave my mind to seek and to search out with
wisdom concerning all things which are done under
heaven; an evil business, which God has given to the
14 sons of men, with which to vex themselves. I saw all
the things which are done under the sun; and, behold,
15 it was all vanity, and striving after wind. That which
is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is
16 wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with my
heart, saying, "Behold, I have gained more and greater
wisdom than all who have been before me at Jerusalem;
yea, my mind has learned much wisdom and knowledge."
17 And I gave my mind to know wisdom, and to know
senselessness and folly; I perceived that this also is
18 striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow.

1 I said in my heart, "Come, now, I will try thee with
mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure!" But, behold, this also
2 was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad"; and of
3 mirth, "What avails it?" I thought in my heart to
strengthen my body with wine, and, while my heart
cleaved to wisdom, to lay hold on folly, till I should see
what was good for the sons of men, which they should
4 do under heaven all the days of their life. I made me
great works. I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards.
5 I made me gardens and parks, and planted in
6 them fruit-trees of every kind. I made me pools of
water, with which to water the grove that produces trees.
7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born
in my house. I had also herds of great and small animals,
more than all who were in Jerusalem before me.
8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the wealth of
kings, and of the provinces. I got me men-singers and

women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, a
9 chosen woman, and chosen women. So I became greater
than all that were before me in Jerusalem. My wisdom
10 also remained with me. And whatever mine eyes desired
I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart
from any joy. For my heart rejoiced by means of all
my labor, and this was my portion from all my labor.
11 Then I looked upon all the works which my hands had
wrought, and upon all the labor which I had toiled in
performing, and, behold, it was all vanity, and striving
after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.

12 Then I turned myself to behold wisdom and senselessness
and folly. For what can the man do that comes
after the king? even that which has been already done.
13 I saw, indeed, that wisdom excels folly, as far as light
14 excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head,
but the fool walks in darkness; yet I perceived also that
15 one event happens to them all. Then I said in my
heart, "As it happens to the fool, so it happens to me.
Why, then, was I wiser than others?" Then I said in my
16 heart, "This, also, is vanity." For there is no remembrance
of the wise man more than of the fool for ever;
for in the days to come shall all that now is be forgotten;
17 and, alas! the wise man dies, as well as the fool. Therefore
I hated life, because what is done under the sun
appeared evil to me. For all is vanity, and striving after
18 wind. Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken
under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that
19 shall be after me. And who knows whether he shall
be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he be lord of all
the labor with which I have wearied myself, and in
which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This,
also, is vanity.

20 Therefore I turned to give up my heart to despair in
regard to all the labor with which I had wearied myself
21 under the sun. For there is a man whose labor has
been in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet
to a man who has not thus labored must he leave it as
22 his portion. This, also, is vanity and a great evil. For
what has man of all his labor, and the striving of his
spirit, with which he wearies himself under the sun?
23 For all his days are grief, and trouble is his occupation;
even in the night his heart takes no rest. This, also, is
24 vanity. There is nothing better for a man than to eat, and
drink, and let his soul enjoy good in his labor. But this,
25 as I have seen, comes from the hand of God. For who
has banqueted more, or been more eager in it, than I?
26 For to a man who is good in his sight God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives
the wearisome business of gathering and heaping up, to
give it to him who is good before God. This, also, is
vanity, and striving after wind.

1 Every thing has a fixed period; its appointed time
2 has every thing under heaven. Being born has its time,
and dying its time. Planting has its time, and its time
3 plucking up what is planted. Killing has its time, and
healing its time. Breaking down has its time, and its
4 time building up. Weeping has its time, and laughing
its time. Mourning has its time, and dancing its time.
5 Its time has casting stones asunder, and its time gathering them together. Embracing has its time, and its time
6 refraining from embracing. Its time has seeking, and
its time losing. Its time has keeping, and its time casting
7 away. Its time has rending, and its time sewing.
8 Silence has its time, and speaking its time. Its time has
loving, and its time hating. Its time has war, and its

9 time peace. What profit has he that labors from that
with which he wearies himself?
10 I have seen the labor which God has given to the
11 sons of men with which to vex themselves. God makes
every thing good in its time; but he has put the world
into the heart of man, so that he understands not the
work which God does, from the beginning to the end.
12 I know that there is nothing better for a man than that
13 he should rejoice and enjoy good his life long. But
when a man eats and drinks, and enjoys good through
14 all his labor, this is the gift of God. I know that whatever God does, that shall be for ever. Nothing can
be added to it, and nothing taken from it; and God
15 does it that men may fear before him. That which is,
was long ago; and that which is to be, has already
been; and God recalls that which is past.

16 Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of
justice there was iniquity, and in the place of righteousness,
17 iniquity. Then said I in my heart, "God will
judge the righteous and the wicked. For there shall be
a time for every employment and for every work [to be
judged]."

18 I said in my heart concerning the sons of men, that
God will prove them and see that they are like the
19 beasts. For that which befalls the sons of men befalls
beasts; one lot befalls both. As the one dies, so dies the
other. Yea, there is one spirit in them, and a man has
20 no preëminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All
go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to
21 dust again. Who knows the spirit of man, whether
it goes upward, and the spirit of a beast, whether it goes
22 downward to the earth? And so I saw that there is
nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his

labors; for that is his portion. For who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

1 Then I turned and saw all the oppressions which take
place under the sun; and, behold, there were the tears
of the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and from
the hand of their oppressors there was violence, and
2 they had no comforter. Therefore I praised the dead,
who have been long ago dead, more than the living, who
3 are yet alive. Yea, better than both of them is he
who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil work
which is done under the sun.

4 And I saw all labor, and all success in work, that
for this a man is envied by his neighbour. This, also,
5 is vanity, and striving after wind. The fool folds his
6 hands together and eats his own flesh. Better is a hand
full of quietness, than both hands full of weariness and
striving after wind.

7 Then I turned and saw other vanity under the sun.
8 There is one who is alone, and no one with him; yea,
he has neither son nor brother; yet is there no end to
all his labor, and his eye is not satisfied with riches.
[Neither does he say,] "For whom do I labor and de-
prive myself of good?" This, also, is vanity; yea, it
9 is an evil thing! Two are better than one, because
10 they have a good reward for their labor. For if they
fall, the one will lift his fellow up; but woe to him
who is alone when he falls, and has not another to help
11 him up! Again, if two lie together, then they have
12 heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if an
enemy prevail against one, two shall withstand him;
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better is a child poor but wise, than a king old and
14 foolish, who will no more be admonished. For out of

prison comes forth such a one to reign; whereas, he
15 that is born a king becomes poor. I saw that all the
living, who walk under the sun, were with the child
16 who stood up in his stead. There was no end to all
the people before whom he went forth; yet they that
come after shall not rejoice in him. This, also, is vanity,
and striving after wind.

1 Look well to thy feet, when thou goest to the house
of God, and draw nigh to hear, rather than to offer
sacrifice, like fools. For they consider not that they do
2 evil. Be not hasty with thy mouth, and let not thy
heart be swift to utter any thing before God. For God
is in heaven, and thou upon earth. Therefore let thy
3 words be few. For a dream comes with a multitude of
matters, and a fool's voice with a multitude of words.
4 When thou vowest a vow to God, delay not to pay it;
for he hath no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou
5 hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow than
6 that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy
mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, and say not before the
angel, "It was a mistake!" Wherefore should God be
angry on account of thy voice, and destroy the work of
7 thy hands? For in a multitude of dreams is a multitude
of vanities; so, also, in a multitude of words; but fear
thou God!

8 If thou seest oppression of the poor, and justice and
equity perverted in a province, be not alarmed at the
matter. For over the high there is a higher, who
watches, and there is one higher than they all. An
9 advantage to a land in all respects is a king who is
10 honored by the land. He that loves silver shall not be
satisfied with silver; and he that loves riches shall have
11 no profit from them. This, also, is vanity. When goods

increase, they are increased that eat them; and what
advantage has the owner thereof, save the beholding of
12 them with his eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is
sweet, whether he have eaten little or much; but the
13 repletion of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There
is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, — riches
14 kept by the owner thereof to his hurt. For those riches
perish by some calamity, and, if he have a son, there
15 is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his
mother's womb naked, so shall he go away again, as
he came, and shall take away nothing of his labor
16 which he may carry in his hand. This is also a sore
evil, that, in all points as he came, so shall he go. And
what profit is it to him, that he has labored for wind?
17 All his days he ate in darkness, and had much grief,
18 and anxiety, and vexation. Behold, what I have seen
is, that it is good and proper for one to eat and drink,
and to enjoy the good of all his labor which he takes
under the sun all the days of his life, which God gives
19 him; for it is his portion. To whatever man also God
has given riches and wealth, and has given him to enjoy
them and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor;
20 this is the gift of God. For he thinks not much upon
the days of his life; for God answers him with the joy
of his heart.

1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun,
2 and it is common among men; a man to whom God
has given riches, wealth, and honor, and nothing is
wanting to him which he desires, yet God gives him not
to taste thereof; but a stranger enjoys it. This is vanity,
3 and a grievous evil. Though a man have a hundred
children, and live many years, and though the days of
his years be many, if his soul be not satisfied with good,

and he have no burial, I say that an untimely birth is
4 better than he. This, indeed, comes in vanity, and goes
down into darkness, and its name is covered with dark-
5 ness; it has not seen the sun, nor known it; yet has it
6 rest rather than the other. Yea, though he live a thou-
sand years twice told, and see no good, — do not all
go to one place?

7 All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet his
8 desires are not satisfied. For what advantage has the
wise man over the fool? What advantage has the poor,
9 who knows how to walk before the living? Better is
the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire.
This, also, is vanity, and striving after wind.

10 What one is, that has his name long been called;
and it is known that he is man, and that he cannot con-
11 tend with Him who is mightier than he. Seeing there
are many things which increase vanity, what advantage
12 has man [from them]? For who knows what is good
for man in life, in all the days of his vain life, which he
spends as a shadow? For who can tell a man what
shall be after him under the sun?

1 A good name is better than precious perfume, and
2 the day of one's death than the day of his birth. It is
better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the
house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and
3 the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than
laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the
4 heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the
house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the
5 house of mirth. It is better for a man to hear the re-
6 buke of the wise than to hear the song of fools. For
as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter
7 of a fool. This, also, is vanity. Surely the gain of

oppression makes a wise man foolish, and a gift corrupts
8 the understanding. Better is the end of a thing than
its beginning. Better is the patient in spirit than the
9 proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry;
10 for anger rests in the bosom of fools. Say not, "What
is the cause that the former days were better than
these?" For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning
11 this. Wisdom is as good as an estate; yea, it has
an advantage over it for them that see the sun. For
12 wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence. But
knowledge has the advantage. For wisdom gives life
13 to them that have it. Consider the work of God! Who
can make straight that which he has made crooked?
14 In the day of prosperity be joyful; but look for a day
of adversity! for this, also, as well as the other, has
God appointed, to the end that a man shall not find out
15 what shall befall him in the future. All this have I
seen in my days of vanity. There are righteous men
who perish in their righteousness, and there are wicked
16 men who live long in their wickedness. Be not righteous
overmuch; neither make thyself over-wise! Why
17 shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked;
neither be thou a fool! Why shouldst thou die before
18 thy time? It is good that thou shouldst take hold of
this; yea, also, from that withdraw not thy hand. For
19 he that fears God shall escape all those things. Wisdom
strengthens the wise more than ten mighty men who
20 are in the city. Truly there is not a righteous man upon
21 the earth who does good and sins not. Give no heed
to all words which are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant
22 curse thee! For many times, also, thine own
heart knows that thou thyself likewise hast cursed
23 others. All this have I tried by wisdom. I said, "I
24 will be wise"; but it was far from me. That which is
far off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

25 I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to
seek out wisdom and reason, and to know wickedness
26 and folly, yea, foolishness and madness. And I have
found more bitter than death the woman whose heart
is snares and nets, and her hands bands. He that pleases
God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken
27 by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the Preacher,
28 putting one thing to another to find knowledge. That
which my soul yet seeks, and I find not, is this; a man
among a thousand I have found, but a woman among a
29 thousand have I not found. Lo, this only have I found,
that God has made man upright, but they seek out many
devices.

1 Who is like the wise man, and him who knows the
explanation of a thing? A man's wisdom brightens his
countenance, and the harshness of his face is changed.
2 I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and
3 that on account of the oath of God. Be not in haste to
depart from him; persist not in an evil thing! For
4 whatever pleases him, that he does. For the word of
the king is powerful; and who can say to him, "What
5 doest thou?" He that keeps the commandment shall
experience no evil; and the heart of the wise man has
6 regard to time and judgment. For to every thing there
is a time and judgment. For the misery of man is
7 great upon him. For no one knows what shall be; for
8 who can tell him how it shall be? No man has power
over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no man has power
over the day of death; and there is no discharge in that
war; and wickedness shall not deliver those that are
guilty of it.

9 All this have I seen, and I have given heed to all
things that are done under the sun. There is a time
10 when man rules over man to his hurt. And so I saw

the wicked buried, while the righteous, coming and going from the holy place, were forgotten in the city. This, also, is vanity.

11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore does the heart of the sons of men
12 become bold within them to do evil. But though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and have his days prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them
13 that fear God, that fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked; he shall be like a shadow, and shall not prolong his days, because he fears not before God.

14 There is a vanity which takes place upon the earth, that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, and that there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work
15 of the righteous. I said, "This, also, is vanity!" Then I commended joy; because nothing is good for a man under the sun, except to eat and to drink and to be joyful; for it is this that abides with him for his labor during the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom, and to see the business which is done upon the earth, — for neither
17 day nor night does one see sleep with his eyes, — then I saw the whole work of God, that a man cannot comprehend that which takes place under the sun; how much soever he labor to search it out, yet shall he not comprehend it; yea, though a wise man resolve to know it, yet shall he not be able to comprehend it.

1 For I directed my mind to all this, even to search out all this, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God, and yet neither his love nor hatred does man know. All this is before their

2 eyes. All things [happen to them] as to all. There is
one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the
good, to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that
sacrifices, and to him that sacrifices not; as is the good,
so is the sinner; he that swears, as he that fears an oath.
3 This is an evil among all things which take place under
the sun, that there is one event to all; therefore, also,
the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness
is in their heart while they live, and afterward they go
4 down to the dead. For who is there that is excepted?
With all the living there is hope; for a living dog is
5 better than a dead lion. For the living know that they
shall die; but the dead know not any thing, and there
is no more to them any advantage, for their memory is
6 forgotten. Their love, also, and their hatred, and their
envy, is now perished; neither have they a portion any
more, for ever, in any thing which happens under the
sun.

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy
wine with a cheerful heart; for now is God pleased with
8 thy works. Let thy garments be always white, and let
9 not fragrant oil be wanting upon thy head. Enjoy life
with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy vain
life which he has given thee under the sun, all thy vain
days. For this is thy portion in life by means of thy
labor with which thou weariest thyself under the sun.
10 Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might!
For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor
wisdom in the under-world, whither thou goest.

11 I turned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not
to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread
to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor
favor to men of knowledge; but time and chance hap-

12 pen to them all. For man knows not his time. As
fishes that are taken in a destructive net, and as birds
that are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared
in a time of distress, when it falls suddenly upon them.

13 This also have I seen; even wisdom under the sun,
14 and it seemed great to me. There was a little city,
and few men within it; and there came a great king
against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks
15 against it. Now there was found within it a poor, wise
man; and he, by his wisdom, delivered the city; yet
16 no man remembered that same poor man. Then said
I, "Wisdom is better than strength"; and yet the poor
man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.
17 The quiet words of the wise are sooner heard than the
18 clamor of a foolish ruler. Wisdom is better than weapons
1 of war. But one offender destroys much good. Dead
flies make the oil of the perfume-mixer offensive and
putrid; thus more weighty often than wisdom and honor
2 is a little folly. A wise man's mind is at his right hand;
3 but a fool's mind is at his left. Yea, even when the
fool walks in the way, his understanding fails him, and
he proclaims to every one that he is a fool.

4 If the anger of a ruler rise up against thee, leave not
thy place! for quietness puts to rest great offences.
5 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun; an
6 error which proceeds from the ruler. Folly is set in
7 great dignity, and the noble sit in a low place. I have
seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as ser-
8 vants on foot. He that digs a pit shall fall into it; and
whoso breaks through a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.
9 Whoso removes stones shall be hurt therewith, and he
10 that cleaves wood shall be endangered thereby. If the
iron be blunt, and one do not whet the edge, then must
he put forth more strength; but wisdom is preferable for

11 giving success. If a serpent bite before he is charmed,
12 then there is no advantage to the charmer. The words
of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a
13 fool are his destruction. The beginning of the words
of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is mis-
14 chievous madness. A fool also multiplies words, though
man knows not what shall be; and who can tell him
15 what shall be after him? The labor of the foolish man
wearies him, because he knows not how to go to the city.
16 Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy
17 princes feast in the morning! Happy thou, O land, when
thy king is a noble, and thy princes eat in due season,
18 for strength, and not for drunkenness! By much sloth-
fulness the building decays; and by the slackness of the
19 hands the house leaks. A feast is made for laughter,
and wine makes merry; but money answers all things.
20 Curse not the king; no, not in thy thought; and curse
not the rich in thy bed-chamber! for a bird of the air
shall carry the voice, and that which has wings shall tell
the matter.

1 Cast thy bread upon the waters! for after many days
2 thou shalt find it. Give a portion to seven, yea, to
eight! for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the
3 earth. When the clouds are full of rain, they empty
themselves upon the earth; and when the tree falls to
the south or the north, in the place where the tree falls,
4 there it shall be. He that watches the wind shall not
sow, and he that gazes upon the clouds shall not reap.
5 As thou knowest not the way of the wind, nor how the
bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child,
so thou canst not know the doings of God, who causes
6 all things. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the
evening withhold not thy hand! For thou knowest not

whether this shall prosper, or that, or whether both shall
be alike good.

7 Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is
8 for the eyes to behold the sun. For though a man live
many years, he rejoices in them all; for he remembers
the days of darkness, that they shall be many. All that
9 comes is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,
and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,
and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of
thine eyes! but know thou, that for all these things God
10 will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow
from thy heart, and put away evil from thy body! for
childhood and youth are a vapor.

1 Remember, also, thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh,
of which thou shalt say, "I have no pleasure in them";
2 before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the
stars become dark, and the clouds return after the rain;
3 at the time when the keepers of the house tremble, and
the men of war bow themselves, and the grinders cease
because they are few, and those that look out of the
4 windows are darkened; when the doors are shut in the
streets, because the sound of the grinding is low; when
they rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daugh-
5 ters of music are brought low; when, also, they are
afraid of that which is high, and terrors are in the way,
and the almond is despised, and the locust is a burden,
and the caper-berry fails; since man goes to his long
6 home, and the mourners go about the streets; — before
the silver cord be snapped, and the golden bowl be
broken, or the bucket broken at the fountain, or the
7 wheel broken at the well, and the dust return to the
earth as it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it.

8 Mere vanity, saith the preacher, all is vanity!

9 Moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still
taught the people knowledge; yea, he considered, and
10 sought out, and set in order, many proverbs. The
Preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and the
11 correct writing of words of truth. The words of the
wise are as goads, yea, as driven nails are the words of
12 members of assemblies, given by one teacher. And,
moreover, by these, my son, be warned! Of making
many books there is no end, and much study wearies
13 the flesh. Let us hear the end of the whole discourse!
Fear God and keep his commandments! For this is
14 the duty of all men. For God will bring every work
into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be
good, or whether it be evil.

THE CANTICLES,

OR

THE SONG OF SONGS,

BY SOLOMON.

INTRODUCTION.

As I do not regard the collection of songs, which goes under the name of the Song of Solomon, to have an express moral or religious design, perhaps it might have been expedient to pass it by in significant and prudent silence. But when I reflected that the work holds a place in a book so extensively diffused as the Bible, that there are still various opinions in regard to its character and meaning, and that even the cause of religion demands that it should be understood to be what it is, I determined to give it its place in a translation and exposition of the poetic writings of the Hebrews. If I had entertained so low an opinion of it as Grotius, I should have been very doubtful as to the propriety of explaining its meaning. But it appears to me that it will bear a very favorable comparison with the selections from the idyls of Theocritus, and the songs of Anacreon, which are read in our most approved literary institutions. Only one or two passages are too gross to be consistent with modern delicacy. It is adapted to have an immoral and irreligious influence, only when it is perverted, and made to constitute an inspired model for the expression of feelings of devotion. When perverted in this way, its direct effect must be to debase religion, and consequently to promote immorality.

The title of the work could not have been prefixed to it by its author. The Song of Songs is undoubtedly an instance of the Hebrew superlative, meaning the finest or most beautiful of songs. It is, moreover, improbable that the title implies a comparison of the work with other poetry written by Solomon. The meaning of the person who gave the book its title was, that it contained the most beautiful of songs, and that Solomon was its author.

The first and most interesting question which presents itself in relation to this work is, What is its subject? If the Song of Songs had been found in any other book but the Bible, I presume there would have been great unanimity in answering the question. It would be said that few compositions existed, every line of which revealed so fully the subject which occupied the mind of the author. It would be said that one sentiment pervaded the whole, and that sentiment was love. In fact, there is now no dispute respecting the subject of the book, so far as it can be expressed in a single word. It is allowed by all to be love, reciprocal love. The question is, What kind of love is here represented? Is it spiritual, or is it sentimental love, that is, the love of the sexes, as represented in poetry? Is it that love which exists between God and man, or Christ and the church? or that which exists between man and woman?

Since the time of Origen, the opinion has prevailed, that the work is designed to set forth the mutual love of Christ and the church. This distinguished allegorist exerted his great talents, as we are informed by St. Jerome,* in illustrating the book. In his other works, says he, Origen surpassed other men; in this he surpassed himself; so that in him may seem to have been fulfilled that which is said, "The king has led me to his chamber." The unbounded influence of Origen gave the allegorical interpretation prevalence in the church; so that, when Theodore of Mopsuestia, a man of great learning and talent, defended the literal sense of the Canticles, he was excommunicated for this and other causes, after his death, by an assembly of fanatical bishops and monks, the second council of Constantinople, in the year 553.†

Since the time of the condemnation of Theodore, the prevalent belief of Christendom has been, that the book contains a representation of the mutual love of Christ and the church. This would seem to be the most general opinion at the present day, if we may judge of the opinion of the Christian church by what is expressed in the popular commentaries. It is contained in the captions to the chapters in the common version.

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* Opera, Tom. II., p. 807, Edit. Martianay.

† See Rosenmülleri Historia Interpretationis, Vol. III., pp. 251 and 262.

Among the modern Jews, too, the allegorical sense of the book has prevailed, according to which it has been supposed to set forth the dealings of God with the Jewish people. Thus, the Targumist on this book applies it to Jehovah and the Jewish nation, in their journeyings from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

As the mystical interpretation of this book commenced and advanced with the general prevalence and progress of the allegorical mode of interpretation, so it has declined in proportion as that mode of interpretation has been understood to be without foundation. Since the time of Grotius, the prevailing opinion of the learned critics who have examined the work has been, that the subject of it is not spiritual or religious love, but that which exists between man and woman.

The peculiar view of Grotius has found few supporters. He supposes the book to contain a dialogue between newly married persons, in which very gross ideas are veiled by decent expressions.* But since his time, that is, since the principle of interpretation has been generally acknowledged, that language can have no other meaning than that which exists in the mind of the writer, the mystical sense has been given up by most critics on the continent, and by many in England; such as Michaelis, Herder, Eichhorn, Doederlein, Dathe, Seiler, Jahn, De Wette, Umbreit, Ewald, and many others. In England, the distinguished Methodist, Adam Clarke, the Calvinistic dissenter, John Pye Smith, and the Biblical translator, Dr. Boothroyd, who is also an orthodox dissenter, have also abandoned the mystical explanation.

There are those, however, in modern times, who yet hold fast the allegorical interpretation. Among these is the Romanist, Hug, who supposes the book to be of a political nature. Under the image of a spouse, as he thinks, is set forth a part of the ten tribes, which, being left in their country after the destruction of Samaria, sought to be reunited to the Jewish nation under the reign of Hezekiah. The Jews, represented by the brothers of the Shulamite, are unwilling that the union should take place.

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* "Est *ὀαριστύς* (i. e. garritus conjugum inter se) inter Salomonem et filiam regis Egypti, interloquentibus etiam choris duobus, tum juvenum tum virginum, qui in proximis thalamo locis excubabant. Nuptiarum arcana sub honestis verborum involucris hic latent; quæ etiam causa est cur Hebræi veteres hunc librum legi noluerint, nisi a jam conjugio proximis.

Rosenmüller adopts the theory, that the work sets forth the love of Solomon for wisdom. It is not a little remarkable, however, that while Rosenmüller avows this to be his view in the introduction to his commentary on the book, he makes not the slightest allusion to it in the commentary itself, extensive as it is.

In England, Bishop Percy and John Mason Good avow their belief in the mystical interpretation, but, like Rosenmüller, they do not apply their theory to the interpretation of the book, but comment upon it as if the literal were the only sense.

In this country, the old notion, that the book sets forth the mutual love of Christ and the church, is probably the most prevalent. But Professor Robinson, in his Bible Dictionary, adopts the view, that the subject of the book is the mutual love of Jehovah and the Jewish nation.

Professor Stuart, of Andover, has also avowed his faith in the mystical exposition of the Canticles, in his recent work on the canon of the Old Testament. He has adopted the view, that the subject of the book is the relation of God to the individual soul, and the aspirations of the soul to be united to the Creator.

I might mention several other theories. But it would answer no good purpose, as I do not intend to examine them one by one, in order to show which is the most, or the least, tenable. I believe that there is not the slightest foundation for any one of them; that not one of them can be accepted, without setting at defiance all just views of the nature of language, and all solid principles of interpretation.

The decisive objection, which applies in nearly an equal degree to all these theories, is, that there is no mention, or even intimation, in the work itself, of that which they say is its great and principal subject. These interpreters tell us that the work expresses the mutual love of Jehovah and the Hebrew nation, or of Christ and the church, or of God and the individual soul. In opposition to this, it is enough to say, that it is mere fancy; that there is not the slightest allusion to God, to Christ, to the church, or to the soul of man, as related to God, in the whole book. The only persons introduced into it are human. There is not a sentence, or part of a sentence, which, according to the common use of language, expresses any religious idea. This is the decisive consideration with me. The author has in no way indicated that he uses language in any but the obvious and usual sense. In all allegory, it is necessary that the principal subject should be in some way indicated. If allegory is a long continued comparison, it is necessary that the author should in some way make known to us the subject compared. But in the book of Canticles this is not the case. The principal subject, as understood by the allegorists, does not appear in it. The book is all comparison, and nothing to be compared; all illustration, and nothing to be illustrated. The thing to be illustrated comes from without, — from the mind of the interpreter, arbitrarily imposing a sense on the author's words in consequence of some imagined necessity, which is wholly independent of any thing in the work itself. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, who would have known that it was intended to illustrate the disposition of God towards men, unless our Saviour had indicated such an application of it? So in the allegory of the Vine which came out of Egypt, it is expressly stated, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." So every writer of common sense, who makes use of metaphor, comparison, or allegory, will in some way indicate the principal subject to be illustrated. But it is not pretended that the author of the Canticles has done this. The only just conclusion, then, is, that he has not made use of allegory; that he designed his language to be understood in its common and obvious sense.

It has been said, in favor of the mystical interpretation, that in other writers of the Scriptures language similar to that in the Canticles is used; that Jehovah is called the husband of his people, and the people represented as a faithless wife. Now, without stating at present how small is the resemblance between the Canticles and the comparisons just referred to, there is one obvious difference which deprives this reference to such comparisons of any force as an argument. It is, that the subject compared is always prominent in those illustrations of the Hebrew prophets. Thus, in Isaiah liv. 5, "Thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name." Such illustrations, therefore, if they resembled the language in the Canticles much more than they do, would only show how its language *might have been*, not how it *is*, used. Because an adulterous woman, in the writings of the prophets, represents the Jewish people in their rebellion against Jehovah, it surely does not follow that every woman or maiden in the Scriptures does, or may, denote the Jewish people. Because a tender husband sometimes denotes a compassionate God in relation to his people, it surely does not follow that every husband or lover in the Scriptures denotes the Supreme Being. Because the church is compared to a chaste virgin, it does not follow that every virgin denotes the church. Before we can admit that any writer intends to denote the Supreme Being by such expressions, he must himself indicate it by express declaration, or intelligible implication, as the prophets have done in the cases to which reference has been made. Now the author of the Canticles has not intimated to us in any way that in his songs he had in view any other characters than man and woman, or any other kind of love than human or sentimental love. We have no right, then, to go beyond this meaning. Those who have adduced this illustration from the prophets have at best only shown what *might be*, not what *is*. There is no part of the Old Testament, or at least no difficult part, which may not be allegorized with as much reason as the Canticles.

But, in the second place, I deny that the language of the prophets, in the cases referred to, is at all analogous to that of the Canticles. Those passages in the prophets which set forth the ingratitude of the house of Israel to Jehovah under the image of a wife faithless to a tender husband are wholly unlike any thing in the book of Canticles. In the former the Supreme Being always appears as the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, the comparison being used incidentally to illustrate his own conduct or that of his people. In the latter we find only lovers and maidens; the praise of personal beauty and passionate expressions of love; lovers conversing with each other, placed in different scenes, eating, drinking, sleeping, embracing, running, climbing, visiting gardens, feeding flocks, in fine all that is usually found in erotic poetry. Who can fail to perceive the difference between such representations and any views which the sublime Hebrew prophets give of the character and conduct of God?

It seems to me wholly inconsistent with the reverence for Jehovah which existed in the Hebrew mind, that one of their writers should compose such a book as Canticles to illustrate the feelings which should exist between man and his Creator. It is a monstrous supposition. There is nothing in the Hebrew literature to justify it. Who is there among us that would dare to use much of the language of the Canticles in reference to the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity? Had not the Jews as great a reverence for the venerable name as Christians? Let us conceive of the author of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, after having spoken of the Supreme Being as having "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heaven with his span, and gathered the dust of the earth into a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance," as the Being "before whom all nations are nothing, and accounted less than nothing and vanity," as addressing himself to his devotions. Would he have commenced with, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy caresses are better than wine"? Would he have applied to the Supreme Being the language, "My beloved spake and said unto me, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away'"? Would Solomon, who, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, used the sublime language, "Behold, the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee," have addressed his Creator in the language, "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. Like a gazelle is my beloved, or a young hind," &c.? I might proceed with interrogations of this kind, but there is language in the Canticles which I could not apply to the Supreme Being in the manner required by the mystical theory, without feeling guilty of blasphemy.

In support of the mystical interpretation of the Canticles, reference has been made to the pantheistic mysticism of the religious sect called Sufis, which has long existed in the East, and especially to the songs of Hafiz, a Persian writer of the fourteenth century, who has been supposed to teach mystic religious doctrines under the images of love, wine, &c. But it is doubtful whether Hafiz himself attached a religious meaning to many of his songs. It is certain, that most of them relate only to sentimental love. Umbreit, who appears to have given considerable attention to the subject, says, — "The love-poems, Nisamis, Leila and Medschnun, and Jussuf and Suleicha, have been explained allegorically, although, according to the evident intention of the poet, they require a literal interpretation." * Sir William Jones observes, — "It has been made a question, whether the poems of Hafiz must be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense; but the question does not admit of a general and direct answer; for even the most enthusiastic of his commentators allow that some of them are to be taken literally." † The Conversations-Lexicon, or Encyclopædia Americana, which may be supposed to represent the opinion of the learned in Germany, says, — "The songs of Hafiz were collected into a *divan*, after his death, which was published complete (Calcutta, 1791) and translated into German by the celebrated Orientalist, Von Hammer (2 vols. Stuttgard, 1812 – 1815). The poems of Hafiz are distinguished for sprightliness and Anacreontic festivity. He is not unfrequently loud in praise of wine, love, and pleasure. *Some writers have sought a mystic meaning in these verses.* Feridoun, Sururi, Sadi, and others, have attempted to explain what they supposed to be the hidden sense."

Before what appear to be love-songs in any nation can afford any confirmation of a mystical sense in the Canticles, it must be shown that there are some intimations in them that their sensual expressions are designed as images of spiritual things. If this cannot be shown, it is reasonable to conclude that they have no allegoric meaning. But if there are in them decided intimations of a spiritual meaning, then they are unlike the Song of Solomon.

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* See Umbreit's Lied der Liebe, p. 5.

† Asiatic Researches, Vol. III., p. 172.

In the literature of several nations, an allegorical sense has been given to the productions of distinguished poets by their admirers. The Iliad of Homer, the songs of Hafiz, and the Canticles ascribed to Solomon have met with the same fortune. From the allegorical use of them made in an age subsequent to that in which they were written we cannot infer what was the original design and meaning of either.

I have no disposition to deny, however, that among the productions of the Sufi poets are found poems in which sensual images are used for the purpose of expressing devotional feelings. This might be expected from the obscene symbols of the Sufi religion, as described by Tholuck. "Voluptatem ex unione [i. e. cum Deo] captam, turpem adsciscentes figuram, assimilaverunt cum coitu maris et feminæ, præeuntibus Indis quorum in Upnekhato, T. I., p. 241, conjunctio mystica cum Deo comparatur cum concubitu mulieris prædilectæ, inter quem nulla in mariti animo firma cogitatio permaneat aut imaginationis species, sed universæ sensuum animique vires immersæ sint in suavissimam jucunditatis commotionem."*

I do not profess a thorough acquaintance with these writings. But having examined the specimens found in the writings of Sir William Jones, and in Tholuck's selections † from the mystic poets of the East, I am convinced that none of them bear much resemblance to the Canticles. They are evidently productions of a different nature, and connected with a religion as different from the Jewish as darkness from light.

Among the specimens most favorable to the opinion of those who form their judgment of the nature of a Hebrew poem from the productions of mystic Sufi pantheists or the songs of Mahometan dervishes, are the two given by Mr. Lane in his work on the Modern Egyptians, contained in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge. These specimens I shall quote entire for the satisfaction of the reader, the more especially because they appear to have had great influence on the mind of Professor Stuart, and are quoted by him as the principal support of the opinion which he adopts, that the Canticles "express the warm and earnest desire of the soul after God, in language borrowed from that which characterizes chaste affection between the sexes."

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* Tholuck's Ssufismus, p. 94.

† Blüthensammlung aus der Morgenländischen Mystik, von F. A. G. Tholuck. Berlin, 1825.

"The durweesh," says Mr. Lane,* "pointed out the following poem as one of those most common at zikrs, and as one which was sung at the zikr, which I have begun to describe. I translate it verse for verse, and imitate the measure and system of rhyme of the original, with this difference only, that the first, third, and fifth lines of each stanza rhyme with each other in the original, but not in my translation.

"'With love my heart is troubled;
And mine eyelid hindereth sleep:
My vitals are dissevered;
While with streaming tears I weep.
My union seems far distant:
Will my love e'er meet my eye?
Alas! did not estrangement
Draw my tears, I would not sigh.

"'By dreary nights I 'm wasted:
Absence makes my hope expire:
My tears, like pearls, are dropping;
And my heart is wrapt in fire.
Whose is like my condition?
Scarcely know I remedy.
Alas! did not estrangement
Draw my tears, I would not sigh.

"'O turtle-dove! acquaint me,
Wherefore thus dost thou lament?
Art thou so stung by absence?
Of thy wings deprived and pent?
He saith, 'Our griefs are equal;
Worn away with love, I lie.'
Alas! did not estrangement
Draw my tears, I would not sigh.

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* Modern Egyptians, Vol. II., p. 195.

"'O First and Everlasting!
Show thy favor yet to me;
Thy slave, Ahh'mad El-Bek'rec*
Hath no Lord excepting thee..
By Ta′-ha′,† the great prophet!
Do thou not his wish deny.
Alas! did not estrangement
Draw my tears, I would not sigh.'"

"I must translate a few more lines," says Mr. Lane, "to show more strongly the similarity of these songs to that of Solomon; and, lest it should be thought that I have varied the expressions, I shall not attempt to render them into verse. In the same collection of poems sung at zikrs is one which begins with these lines: —

"'O gazelle from among the gazelles of El-Yem′en!
I am thy slave without cost:
O thou small of age, and fresh of skin!
O thou who art scarce past the time of drinking milk!'

"In the first of these verses, we have a comparison exactly agreeing with that in the concluding verse of Solomon's Song; for the word which, in our Bible, is translated a 'roe' is used in Arabic as synonymous with ghaza′l (or a gazelle); and the mountains of El-Yem′en are 'the mountains of spices.' This poem ends with the following lines: —

"'The phantom of thy form visited me in slumber;
I said, "O phantom of slumber! who sent thee?"
He said, "He sent me whom thou knowest;
He whose love occupies thee."
The beloved of my heart visited me in the darkness of night;
I stood, to show him honor, until he sat down.
I said, "O thou my petition, and all my desire!
Hast thou come at midnight and not feared the watchmen?"
He said to me, "I feared; but, however, love
Had taken from me my soul and my breath."'

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* The author of the poem.

† A name of Mahomet.

Compare the above with the second and five following verses of the fifth chapter of Solomon's Song."

Now, as to the first of these religious love-songs of the Mahometan dervishes, whatever slight resemblance it may have to any part of the Canticles, it differs essentially from any of them in the circumstance, that the Supreme Being is expressly introduced as the object of worship. Without this essential circumstance, no one could tell whether it were originally composed for a love-song, or a religious hymn expressing a longing for a union of the soul with God, according to the Sufi philosophy and religion.

In the second poem, quoted by Mr. Lane, it is to be regretted that he did not quote the whole of it. For I can by no means admit the circumstance that it was sung by the dervishes in their morning devotions to be conclusive in regard to the original design of the hymn. Mr. Lane expressly tells us, in a note, that he found the last six lines inserted, with some slight alterations, as a common love-song, in a portion of the Thousand and One Nights, printed at Calcutta, Vol. I., p. 425; Lane's Translation, II., p. 349. Whether the whole was originally composed as a love-song or a devotional hymn does not appear from the parts of it which Mr. Lane gives us. If in the parts omitted there is any clear reference to the Deity, it is unlike any of the Canticles. If there is no such reference, the meaning of the hymn is too doubtful to allow any inference to be drawn from it. For we might as well allow the singing of Dr. Watts's version of the Canticles to be an argument for their original design, as to admit the singing of the mystic dervishes to be an evidence of the original design of their hymns.

Before making some general remarks on this whole subject of attempting to show the character of the Canticles by reference to the pantheistic poetry of the Mahometan Sufis, it may be well to mention that reference has been made even to the poets of Hindostan for the same purpose; especially to the Gitagovinda,* the production of a celebrated Hindoo poet, named Jayadeva. This appears to be a mystical poem, designed to celebrate the loves of Crishna and Radha, or the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul. Now, whatever may be the resemblance between the Gitagovinda and Canticles in some of their imagery, there is this essential difference, that, in the former, Crishna was the chief incarnated god of the Hindoos;* and that there are references to other gods, and to various superstitions of the Hindoo mythology, whilst in the Canticles there is no reference to any but human characters. Besides, the author of the Gitagovinda clearly intimates its religious character in the conclusion of the poem.

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* It may be found appended to Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Canticles. Also in the Asiatic Researches, Vol. III.

We have seen, then, that there are material differences between the Canticles and the religious love-songs to which reference has been made. But supposing the resemblance to be much greater than it is, those mystical songs do not in any essential respect resemble the Canticles more than they do the odes of Anacreon, or some of the eclogues of Virgil, and the idyls of Theocritus. And it is not easy to see why the resemblance does not prove the religious character of the odes of Anacreon as much as that of the Canticles.

But, after all, the great objection remains to any conclusion drawn from the pantheistic mystic poets, whether of Persia or India, whether Mahometans or Hindoos, namely, that their productions are founded on a religion and philosophy entirely different from the Jewish. The Canticles are productions of a different country, and separated from any of the songs of the Sufi poets by an interval of nearly two thousand years. The Jewish religion has nothing in common with the pantheistic mysticism on which those songs are founded. There is nothing in the Old Testament of a similar character. If any production similar to those mystical love-songs had existed in the religious literature of the Hebrews, undoubtedly we should have found some of them in the Book of Psalms, which comprises compositions from the age preceding that of David to a period long after the return of the Jews from the captivity at Babylon. But in the most fervent psalms, the forty-second for instance, nothing of the kind is found. Neither is any thing similar to these mystic songs ascribed to the Jewish sects, as described by Josephus and Philo. Nothing of the kind is laid to the charge of the Essenes. It is needless to say that nothing approaching to a like character is found in the New Testament. Nothing similar is discovered even in the allegorical paraphrase of the Targumist * on the Canticles. All those religious love-songs are founded on the Sufi religion, or rather religious philosophy, which, whether it was borrowed from India, as Von Hammer supposes, or arose independently among the Mahometans, according to the opinion of Tholuck,† has no connection with, or resemblance to, the Jewish. It is as different from the latter as darkness from light. The argument, therefore, which is drawn from the mystical songs of the Mahometan devotees for ascribing a mystical character to the Canticles is without foundation.

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* "Crishna continues to this hour the darling god of the Indian women. The sect of Hindoos, who adore him with enthusiastic and almost exclusive devotion, have broached a doctrine which they maintain with eagerness, and which seems general in these provinces; that he was distinct from all the *Avatars*, who had only an *ansa* or portion of his divinity; while Crishna was the person of Vishnu himself in a human form." Sir W. Jones, in Asiatic Researches, Vol. I., p. 260.

To me, also, it appears singular that any one should think it to be for the honor of the book, or of the Jewish religion, or of the Bible, to regard the Canticles as designed to be a book of devotion, a guide to the Jews in the expression of their religious feelings to their Creator. If it be regarded as a specimen of the erotic poetry of the Hebrews, it will be treated with indifference by most readers, and consequently do them no harm. But if regarded as an inspired model and help for devotion, its direct tendency is injurious to morals and religion. That such is its tendency, when so understood, is too plain to need argument. Even Professor Stuart, who professes to believe it an inspired composition, designed "to express the warm and ardent desire of the soul after God," is compelled by his moral feelings

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* The Targum on Solomon's Song may be found translated, appended to Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Canticles.

† Tholuck's Ssufismus, etc., Cap. II.

to express the strangely inconsistent opinion, that "it is the safer and better course to place the Canticles, as the Jews did, among the גְנוּזִים, or books withdrawn from ordinary use"; and, again, that those who neglect to read the book "are to be commended rather than blamed."* He attempts, indeed, to show that what would be dangerous to us in the Western world might be safe for the Orientals, on account of the secluded state in which females were kept among them. But it is not easy to see why sensual imagery should have less influence on the imagination and feelings of an Oriental on account of any difference between Eastern and Western society, or why the language of love-songs, used as the vehicle of devotion, should have less influence to corrupt and debase the religion of an Asiatic than of an American. It seems to be at least probable that what could not with decency be sung in a mixed assembly in this country was never designed by Heaven to be sung or said as a religious exercise in any country. On general principles, I should suppose that the safety was on the side of the colder temperament of the Western world, and that our free intercourse between the sexes was less likely to inflame the imagination and the passions than that guarded seclusion of females through which they are presented to the mind only as objects of sensual love.

Let the people be convinced, however, with Mr. Stuart, that the Canticles were inspired and designed by the Deity as helps for the expression of Jewish devotion, and they will hardly regard the permission or recommendation of the learned professor as a sufficient authority for neglecting to use them in their own devotions. They will very naturally ask how great a portion of the Old and New Testaments might be set aside, if every one might neglect what he thought best, on account of such a difference in manners and customs; and perhaps may not be able to perceive why a professor at Andover should have a better right "to hide," or "put out of public use," the inspired book of Canticles, than a former professor at Cambridge to question the genuineness of the Pentateuch.

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* Stuart on the Canon, &c., p. 381.

It may be that some of the Sufi devotees sing their religious love-songs with devotional feelings. But that the tendency of such a mode of worship is bad is almost self-evident. No one can be surprised, when Professor Tholuck, who in general gives the most favorable aspect of the Oriental mysticism, informs us concerning the dissoluteness and sensuality of the dervishes and Sufis, whose devotional exercises consist of language and images borrowed from sensual love, "Proinde, si quæ dissolutioris vitæ, quin etiam veneris promiscuæ criminationes adversus Derwischios et Ssufios factæ sunt, earum me repellendarum equidem haud parem crederem." *

On the injurious effect of a religious use of the Canticles, the testimony of Dr. Adam Clarke, who, as a travelling Methodist preacher, had great opportunities for observation relating to the subject, is as follows. Speaking of those who attach a spiritual meaning to the book, he says: — "Their conduct is dangerous; and the result of their well intentioned labors has been of very little service to the cause of *Christianity* in general, or to the interests of true *morality* in particular. By their mode of interpretation, an undignified, not to say mean and carnal, language has been propagated among many well meaning religious people, that has associated itself too much with *selfish* and *animal* affections, and created feelings that accorded little with the dignified spirituality of the religion of the Lord Jesus. I speak not from report; I speak from observation and experience, and observation not hastily made. The conviction on my mind, and the conclusion to which I have conscientiously arrived, are the result of frequent examination, careful reading, and close thinking at intervals, for nearly fifty years; and, however I may be blamed by some and pitied by others, I must say, and I say it as fearlessly as I do conscientiously, that in this inimitably fine, elegant Hebrew ode I see nothing of Christ and his church, and nothing that appears to have been intended to be thus understood; and nothing, if applied in this way, that, *per se*, can promote the interests of vital godliness, or cause the simple and sincere not to know

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* See Tholuck's Ssufismus, sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica, etc., Berlin, 1821, p. 88.

Christ after the flesh. Here I conscientiously stand: — May God help me." *

Indeed, the history of religion in all ages and in all countries is full of examples of the danger that excited religious feeling may unite itself with sensual feelings and express itself in sensual images. Witness the representations of some of the Hindoo gods, and the religious rites of various heathen nations. Even in Christendom, hymns have been sung as religious, which fall below any heathen addresses to Phallus or Priapus. In proof of this may be adduced the obscene language used by the early Moravians, in their hymns and other acts of worship. Examples of language of this kind, indecent beyond conception, are quoted by Rimius,† in his writings relating to the Moravians. Fortunately, these sincere, but misguided, Christians were taught by their assailants to correct their dangerous error. But let it be generally believed that the Canticles were inspired and designed "to express the warm and earnest desire of the soul after God," and we shall be likely to have the error of the early Moravians repeated in all its disgusting offensiveness. Let it not be said there is no danger, in a community in which Millerism and Mormonism have found so many proselytes.

The opinion, then, that the Canticles were designed as helps to the soul in its devotions, is more discreditable to the book itself, to the Scriptures, and to the Jewish religion, than that which regards them as relics of the amatory poetry of the Hebrews. That which is noxious is more discreditable than that which is merely indifferent. The odes of Anacreon, while they are read in our schools as amatory poetry, have but little influence of any kind. But if they were taught as helps to devotion, to be repeated day after day as religious exercises during one's whole life, the effect would be very different.

One other argument has been urged of late in favor of the mystical interpretation of the Canticles, which I should think un-

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* See his Introduction to the Song of Solomon.

† See Rimius's History of the Moravians, &c., Tracts, Vols. I. and II., London, 1754. See, also, Southey's Life of Wesley, Vol. I., pp. 188 and 387.

worthy of notice, were it not for the respectability of those who offer it. It is drawn from the difference of opinion, in regard to the object, plan, and design of the Canticles, among those who reject the allegorical interpretation. But this difference of opinion relates not to the general character of the book, or to the meaning of its language, but to the author's special plan and design. It is not strange that there should have been a difference of opinion on these points, since no special object or plan may have existed in the author's mind. But, after all, there is no greater difference of opinion in regard to the Canticles than in regard to Ecclesiastes, Job, and some other books of the Old Testament. And this argument, if it proves any thing, proves that we may fasten an allegorical sense upon any difficult passage or book of the Bible. Besides, for every two different opinions expressed by those who reject the mystical sense of the Canticles, it will be very easy to find four expressed by those who hold it.

Why, then, says the friend of the allegorical interpretation of the Canticles, is the book found in the Scriptures, if it has not a religious meaning or a moral value? This, after all, is, I apprehend, the only argument which has much real weight even with the allegorists. The book is found in the Scriptures; therefore it cannot be understood in its obvious sense; therefore it must have an allegorical sense; and, since the author has not said, or intimated, what the religious sense of his words is, the critics must supply it for him.

Now, suppose that we were wholly unable to answer the question, how a collection of amatory poetry came into the Jewish canon of the Scriptures. Is our ignorance on a point like this a reason for assigning to a man's words a sense which was never in his mind, and which, according to the usage of the language in which he wrote, and of the authors of the same nation, in his own age, or before or after his time, his words are not adapted to express?

No one knows, or has good reason to believe, what individuals or body of men made the collection of the writings of the Old Testament. Of course, we do not know on what judgment, if any, the admission of a writing into this collection rests. For aught we know, all the Hebrew works extant at a particular time may have been included in the collection. The incredible and contradictory Jewish traditions on the subject all go to show that absolutely nothing is known respecting it.* One may find abundance of conjecture and of strained inferences relating to it, but no genuine history. The book of Canticles, then, if placed in the collection of Hebrew literature by an act of judgment, may have been placed there by those who supposed it a production, possessing much poetic beauty, of a person so celebrated throughout the East as Solomon. Much uncertainty exists in regard to the time when the books of the Old Testament began to be regarded as holy writings. That they were so regarded when this book was added to the number cannot be proved. It may then have been regarded as only a collection of national writings; of all that was esteemed valuable in Hebrew literature. That a great part of the Old Testament has a religious character may be accounted for by the predominant religious spirit of the Jews, and the existence of their theocratic institutions.

Or, if we suppose the collector or collectors to have regarded the collection of the Hebrew writings as possessing a moral or religious character when the Canticles were introduced into it, why may not the book have been regarded by them as having a good moral tendency in its literal sense; as designed to recommend monogamy, as some modern expositors suppose; or as designed to show "the reward of fidelity and constancy in affairs of the heart," as others imagine; or that its object was to prove "that love, as the freest and fairest gift of the heart, can no more be destroyed than called forth by outward power," as a third class has maintained; or that the author's design was the general one of setting forth "the pleasures of virtuous love"? These or other reasons may have influenced the collector or collectors in giving it a place in the volume afterwards held sacred by the Jews, without supposing that it possessed a religious or mystical character.

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* See De Wette's Introduction to the Old Testament, § 14, and his references. By consulting the original, it will be seen that the American translator seems to confound the tradition contained in 2 Esdras, ch. xiv., and many of the church fathers, with a different one. The tradition in Esdras is, that the books of the Old Testament were wholly lost by being burned, and that Ezra dictated two hundred and four books by divine inspiration.

But, even supposing, what I do not regard as probable, that the allegorical interpretation prevailed at so early a period as that of the completion of the canon of the Jewish Scriptures, and that the Canticles were admitted into it by those who regarded it as an allegory expressive of religious ideas, it by no means follows that such is the fact. There is abundant reason for distrusting the judgment as well as the information of the collectors of the books of the Old Testament. Witness the false captions to many of the Psalms, the confused state of the prophecies of Jeremiah, the mode in which the prophets were arranged, the ascription to Isaiah of much which he could not have written, in the judgment not merely of rationalists, but of the most orthodox critics. If he or they who placed the Canticles in the Old Testament, hundreds of years after it was written, regarded it as a religious or even an inspired book, this is not a sufficient reason why we should so regard it.

In respect to the mere question, whether the book was contained in the Jewish canon, that is, whether it was generally received by the Jews as a part of their sacred writings for about two hundred years before the Christian era, I entirely agree with those who regard it as canonical. But whether any book has in reality a claim on my faith or practice depends on very different considerations from that of general reception, whether by the Jewish nation or the Christian church. I must satisfy myself first, whether the writer ever laid claim to divine authority, and, if he did, whether he gave any proof of his claim, internal or external. If I admit the authority of the church, that is, of a majority of it, as settling conclusively what I am to receive as of divine authority, I must admit the authority of the church in other matters, and adopt the creed of Romanism at once. The church, that is, the majority of the church, the Roman church, regards the books commonly called apocryphal as canonical. Such is the decree of the council of Trent.

The only way in which a critical and historical inquirer can satisfy himself as to the divine authority of any book of the Old or the New Testament is, to take it up separately, and consider what it claims to be, and how far its claims are supported by internal and external evidence, and then accept it for what it is. If in the Canticles, for instance, we find no mention of God, of duty, or of the destination of man, no doctrine of any kind requiring the faith, or duty requiring the practice, of mankind, let us take the book for what, according to the received use of language, it purports to be, a collection of amatory songs, and award to it, as a work of taste, that portion of praise to which we consider it entitled. This would seem to be all that duty requires of us.

There are some, it is true, who maintain that Jesus Christ and his apostles have given the sanction of divine authority to the genuineness and inspiration of all the books contained in the Jewish canon. In regard to the particular question which I have been discussing, I might urge that the Canticles are nowhere alluded to in the New Testament, as would naturally have been the case if they had been regarded as setting forth the mutual love of Christ and the church, or of Jehovah and the Jewish people, or of God and the human soul. But I have no faith whatever in the proposition, that Jesus Christ meant to extend his authority and approbation to all that was contained in the Jewish canon in his time. I do not believe that it was any part of his mission to decide questions of criticism and interpretation more than of astronomy or geology. Our Saviour referred to the books of the Old Testament, just as he used the phraseology concerning demoniacs, according to the received opinions of the Jews. He had ample work to employ all his time during his short ministry on earth, in establishing the fundamental doctrines of his religion, without entering into controversy with the Jews on matters of criticism and interpretation. If Jesus Christ has settled by his divine authority all the various questions which have arisen in regard to the character, criticism, and meaning of the Old Testament, then one object of his coming into the world was to set bounds to criticism, the inevitable consequence of which would be to put a stop to that mental improvement and that exact knowledge which are the result of criticism. For it is idle to pretend that we have a right to study the Old Testament critically, unless we have a right to judge of its contents according to the laws of critical and historical investigation. I cannot believe that the design of Christ's coming into the world was to put a stop to any scientific investigation. Nothing, it appears to me, is more likely to promote the cause of skepticism than attempts to restrain historical and critical inquiry by dint of authority.

From the references made by our Saviour to the Old Testament, we may conclude that in his view it contained much that is divine. But that he intended to sanction all that is contained in it, or to settle critical questions in regard to the genuineness and authority of every book in it, is in the highest degree improbable. The arguments which have been adduced to support such a proposition fall very far short of their aim. How could he who gave the command, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," have supposed that the barbarous extermination of the Canaanites was by express divine command? Or how could he who died praying for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" have sanctioned the horrible imprecations in the hundred and ninth Psalm, or other passages of the Old Testament having a similar character?

These views, or those which have a similar bearing on the Old Testament, have been expressed by divines of different denominations. The late Dr. Arnold, of the church of England, whose praise as a scholar and a Christian is high wherever the English language is spoken, regarded it as perfectly consistent with the acknowledgment of the divine authority of Christ to pronounce the book of Daniel a forgery.* One of the most distinguished orthodox dissenting divines in England, after expressing the opinion that the Song of Songs is "a pastoral eclogue, or a succession of eclogues, representing in the vivid colors of Asiatic rural scenery, with a splendor of artificial decoration, the honorable loves of a newly married bride and bridegroom, with some other interlocutors," writes thus: — "It is, I deeply feel and acknowledge, an awful thing to appear to go in contravention to the generally assumed position, that our Lord and his apostles recognized the writings received as sacred by the Jews at that time as the exclusive and entire canon. But I humbly request that it may be considered what is meant by the term canon or rule; and whether that meaning can be attached to a composition which has not in it a sentence, or a single word, possessing the nature of a rule, directory, standard, or prescription whatsoever, in reference to facts, or doctrines, or precepts, or any thing at all of a religious kind, *except upon a plan of translating its terms and ideas into another kind of subjects*, of which not the shadow of intimation is given in the composition itself, and against which I am bound to protest, as destructive of the certainty of language, and by inevitable consequence inflicting a deep injury upon the records of revealed truth. If we cannot depend upon the definite and constant meaning of words and reference of sentences, as drawn out by honest philology, we may as well shut our books, resign ourselves to impious indifference, or fall back into the bosom of the pretended infallible church. When I reflect upon the difficulties, using the mildest term, which arise from an endeavour to convert passages containing matter merely genealogical, topographical, numerical, civil, military, — fragments of antiquity, domestic or national, presenting no character whatever of religious matter, — into a rule of faith and manners, I feel it impossible to accept the conclusion; I can find no end to my anxiety, no rest for my faith, no satisfaction for my understanding, till I embrace the sentiment, that the qualities of sanctity and inspiration belong only to the *religious and theological element*, which is *diffused through* the Old Testament; and that, where this element is absent, where there is nothing adapted to communicate 'doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness,' nothing fitted 'to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work,' — there we are not called to acknowledge any inspiration, nor warranted to assume it. Thus, I regard as inspired Scripture all that refers to *holy things*, all that can bear the character of 'oracles of God'; and admit the rest as appendages, of the nature of private memoirs or public records, useful to the antiquary and the philologist, but which belong not to the rule of faith or the directory of practice. To this extent, and to this only, can I regard the sanction of the New Testament as given to the *inspiration* of the Old. In other words, the quality of inspiration, forming the ground of faith and obedience, inheres in every sentence, paragraph, or book, which, either directly or by implication, contains religious truth, precept, or expectation. This, I humbly think, leaves us every thing that a Christian can wish for; and it liberates us from the pressure of difficulties which have often furnished the enemies of revealed truth with pretexts for serious objections. Inspiration belongs to religious objects; and to attach it to other things is to lose sight of its nature, and misapply its design."*

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* See Arnold's Life and Writings, Letter 218, p. 369, Amer. edit.

To other theories, which assign a mystical meaning to the Canticles, some of the arguments which I have used against the view adopted by Professor Stuart apply with equal, others with less, force. All of them are liable to the decisive objection, that they are in opposition to the received use of language. At a time when all the books of the Scriptures were interpreted in the allegorical mode, as by the church fathers, it was a matter of course that the Canticles should be treated in the same way. But now that just principles of interpretation have been applied to the explanation of most parts of the Bible, it is time to give up attempts to allegorize the Canticles. To the popular theory, that Christ and the church are denoted, may be urged the additional objection, that there is not the least appearance of prediction in the book. It implies throughout a state of things then existing, or past. This theory is, also, if possible, more arbitrary, and more completely destitute of support from the use of language and the state of religious knowledge among the contemporaries of the writer, or among the Jews before the time of Christ, than any one of the principal theories which have been mentioned. Against this view, too, it may be justly urged that the book is nowhere alluded to in the New Testament. If the subject of it had been supposed to be Christ and the church, it is reasonable to suppose that allusions to it would have been very frequent, both in the Gospels and Epistles.

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* Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, by John Pye Smith, D. D. London, 1837, p. 53, &c.

Since, then, there is no reason for supposing a mystical religious meaning in the Canticles, and since their whole tenor and complexion are in opposition to such a meaning, the book must be interpreted according to the received use of language. Thus interpreted, its principal subject, as all will admit, is the reciprocal affection between the sexes, as set forth in poetical representation. There may be some doubt as to the relation in which the parties stood to each other, whether in that of lovers before marriage, or in that of the head of the harem to one of its members, or in that of husband and wife. That the last supposition is not true throughout seems to be obvious from the general character of the representation, as well as from particular passages. It is also not analogous to similar compositions by writers of other countries to suppose the affection of married life to be the subject of the work.

We have, then, in the Canticles the remains of the amatory poetry of the Hebrews. Whether the book is to be regarded as one whole, a regular drama, or as a collection of several amatory songs or idyls, is a question which may be considered as somewhat doubtful. Without going into a full discussion of the subject, I adopt the latter opinion, which was the opinion of Herder, Doederlein, Eichhorn, De Wette, Sir William Jones, and Dr. Good, — for the reason that there is not sufficient evidence in favor of a general plan or course of dramatic action. Those who have maintained the other opinion have been obliged to make a great many arbitrary suppositions, and to draw largely on their own imaginations, in order to make out any plausible course of action, or any general design which the writer intended to accomplish.

Thus, while Bossuet and Percy suppose the work to be a pastoral drama, designed to celebrate the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of the king of Egypt, two of the most recent of the German writers on the book, very young men,* however, suppose that it is designed to set forth the praise of true love in humble life, and how an innocent country maiden resisted all the arts of King Solomon to seduce her from her faith to her shepherd lover. Theories as diverse as these may be expected, when a design or plan is sought where there is none to be found. Respecting the first of these theories, it may be remarked that there is very little in the book which seems suited to the occasion of royal nuptials; that there are no allusions to Solomon which imply that he was the subject of the composition, except in ch. iii. 6 – 11, and, perhaps, ch. i. 9 – ii. 7; and that there is too much of rural life in it to be suited to the scene of a royal court. The objection to the second theory is, that it comes more from the imagination of the interpreter than from the language of the author. Dr. Good remarks: — "The Song of Songs cannot be one connected epithalamium, since the transitions are too abrupt for the wildest flights of the Oriental muse, and evidently imply a variety of openings and conclusions; while, as a regular drama, it is deficient in almost every requisite that could give it such a classification; it has neither dramatic fable nor action, neither involution nor catastrophe; it is without a beginning, a middle, or an end. To call it such is to injure it essentially; it is to raise expectations which can never be gratified, and to force parts upon parts which have no possible connection." *

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* Lied der Liebe, das älteste und schönste aus dem Morgenlande. Uebersetzt und ästhetisch erklärt von Friedrich Wilhelm Carl Umbreit. Heidelberg, 1828.

Das Hohelied Salomo's übersetzt, etc., von Dr. Georg Heinrich August Ewald. Göttingen, 1826.

It is true that it is not easy to determine with confidence where each song begins and ends. But the supposition that the book contains several separate pieces is attended with fewer difficulties than that which regards it as one poem of the dramatic kind. It certainly has the advantage of not ascribing to the author more than he has expressed. The manner of dividing the book which seems to me most probable is indicated in the text.

That all these separate songs or poems proceeded from one author is now so general an opinion of the best critics, that it is not necessary to discuss the subject. Whether this author were Solomon admits of greater doubt. When we consider how many of the inscriptions in the book of Psalms are at variance

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* See Preface to his translation of the Canticles.

with their contents, we cannot attach much importance to the title of this book. The diction,* in its Aramæan character, varies so much from that of the Proverbs, that many modern critics have concluded that it proceeded from a different author. There are also passages which do not well harmonize with the supposition that Solomon was the author; such as ch. i. 4, 5, iii. 6–11, vii. 5, viii. 11, 12. On the other hand, there seem to be several allusions to the circumstances and historical relations of the age of Solomon, or that immediately succeeding it. See i. 4, 5, 9, 12, iii. 7, &c., iv. 4, vi. 4, 8, 9, viii. 11, 12. The spirit and character of the poetry seem also to agree well with the most flourishing period of Hebrew literature. The peculiar diction is supposed by De Wette to be susceptible of explanation by maintaining that these songs were preserved orally in the mouths of the people, and were thus in some measure altered. Others seek an explanation of this peculiarity in the province of Palestine to which the writer may have belonged. Either of these suppositions appears to me more probable than that the author wrote long after the Captivity, and transferred himself back to the age of Solomon. I therefore suppose the Canticles to have been written by some Jewish poet, either in the reign of Solomon or soon after it.

For a list of interpreters of the Canticles, see the introduction to this book in Rosenmüller's Scholia. Of those which he has not mentioned, I have seen the translations and notes of Bishop Percy, Thomas Williams, and John Mason Good.

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* On this topic, see the Introductions of Jahn or De Wette.

THE CANTICLES.

I.

An innocent country maiden, accompanied by virgins, is anxious to see her lover. — Ch. i. 2–8.

2 *M.* O that he would kiss me with one of the kisses of his mouth !
For thy love is better than wine.
3 Because of the savor of thy precious perfumes
(Thy name is like fragrant oil poured forth),
Therefore do the virgins love thee.
4 Draw me ; we will run after thee !
The king will lead me to his chambers !
We will be glad and rejoice in thee ;
We will praise thy love more than wine.
Sincerely do they love thee !

5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
6 Gaze not upon me because I am black,
Because the sun has looked upon me !
My mother's sons were angry with me ;
They made me keeper of the vineyards ;
My vineyard, my own, have I not kept.
7 Tell me, thou whom my soul loves, where thou feedest thy flock,

Where thou leadest it to rest at noon;
For why should I be like a veiled one among the flocks
of thy companions?

8 *V.* If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
Trace thou thy way by the tracks of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

II.

Conversation between a lover and maiden. — Ch. i. 9 - ii. 7.

9 *L.* To the horses in the chariots of Pharaoh
Do I compare thee, my love!
10 Comely are thy cheeks with rows of jewels,
Thy neck with strings of pearls.
11 Golden chains will we make for thee,
With studs of silver.

12 *M.* While the king reclines at his table,
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.
13 A bunch of myrrh is my beloved to me,
He shall abide between my breasts.
14 My beloved is to me a cluster of cypress-flowers
From the gardens of Engedi.

15 *L.* Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair!
Thine eyes are doves.

16 *M.* Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, lovely;
And green is our bed.
17 The cedars are the beams of our house,
And its roof the cypresses.

1 I am only a harvest-flower of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.

2 *L.* As the lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

3 *M.* As the apple-tree among the trees of the forest,
So is my beloved among the sons.
In his shadow I love to sit down,
And his fruit is sweet to my taste.
4 He leads me to his banqueting-house,
And his banner over me is love.
Strengthen me with raisins,
5 Refresh me with apples!
For I am sick of love.
6 His left hand is under my head
And his right hand embraces me!

7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please!

III.

The maiden's meeting with her lover in the vineyard. — Ch. ii. 8–17.

8 *M.* The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes,
Leaping upon the mountains,
Bounding over the hills.
9 Like a gazelle is my beloved,
Or a young hind.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;

He is looking in at the windows;
He glances through the lattice.
10 My beloved speaks, and says to me,
"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!
11 For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
13 The fig-tree is spicing its green fruit,
The vines in blossom give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!
14 O my dove, that art in the recesses of the rock,
In the hiding-places of the steep craggy mountain,
Let me see thy face,
Let me hear thy voice!
For sweet is thy voice,
And thy face lovely."
15 Take ye for us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines are now in blossom.
16 My beloved is mine, and I am his;
He feeds among the lilies.
17 When the day breathes, and the shadows flee away,
Come again, my beloved, like a gazelle, or a young hind,
Upon the craggy mountains.

IV.

The maiden's search for her lover. — Ch. iii. 1–5.

1 *M.* Upon my bed, in the night,
I sought him whom my soul loves;
I sought him, but found him not.

2 I will arise now [said I], and go about the city ;
In the streets and the broad ways will I seek him whom my soul loves ;
I sought him, but found him not.
3 The watchmen who go about the city found me ;
"Have you seen" [said I] "him whom my soul loves ?"
4 I had but just passed them,
When I found him whom my soul loves ;
I held him, and would not let him go,
Till I had brought him into my mother's house,
Into the apartment of her that bore me.

5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

V.

A nuptial song relating to Solomon ; or, The conducting of a spouse of Solomon to his palace. — Ch. iii. 6–11.

6 Who is this that comes up from the wilderness,
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the powders of the merchant ?
7 Behold, the carriage of Solomon !
Threescore valiant men are around it,
Of the valiant men of Israel.
8 They all wear swords,
Being skilled in war.
Every one has his sword girded upon his thigh,
On account of danger in the night.
9 King Solomon made for himself a carriage
Of the wood of Lebanon.

10 The pillars thereof he made of silver,
The railing of gold,
The seat of purple,
Its interior curiously wrought by a lovely one of the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,
And behold King Solomon
In the crown with which his mother crowned him,
In the day of his espousals,
In the day of the gladness of his heart.

VI.

Conversation between a lover and maiden. — Ch. iv. – v. 1.

1 *L.* Behold, thou art fair, my love! behold, thou art fair!
Thine eyes are doves behind thy veil;
Thy locks are like a flock of goats
Which lie down on Mount Gilead;
2 Thy teeth like a flock of shorn sheep,
Which come up from the washing-place,
Of which every one bears twins,
And none is barren among them;
3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth comely;
Thy cheeks are like a divided pomegranate behind thy veil;
4 Thy neck is like the tower of David,
Built for an armory,
In which there hang a thousand bucklers,
All shields of mighty men;
5 Thy two breasts are like two young twin gazelles,
That feed among the lilies.

6 When the day breathes, and the shadows flee away,
I will betake me to the mountain of myrrh,
And the hill of frankincense.
7 Thou art all fair, my love;
There is no spot in thee!
8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse,
With me from Lebanon!
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the dens of the lions,
From the mountains of the leopards.
9 Thou hast taken captive my heart, my sister, my spouse;
Thou hast taken captive my heart with one of thine eyes,
With one chain of thy neck.
10 How sweet is thy love, my sister, my spouse!
How much more precious thy caresses than wine,
And the fragrance of thy perfumes than all spices!
11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop the honeycomb!
Honey and milk are under thy tongue,
And the fragrance of thy garments is as the fragrance of Lebanon.
12 A garden inclosed art thou, my sister, my spouse;
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed;
13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with choicest fruits,
Alhenna and spikenard,
14 Spikenard and saffron,
Sweet cane and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,
With all the chief spices;
15 A fountain of the gardens,
A well of living waters,
A stream that flows from Lebanon!

16 *M.* Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south!
Blow upon my garden,
That its spices may flow out!
May my beloved come to his garden,
And eat his pleasant fruits.

1 *L.* I am come to my garden, my sister, my spouse!
I gather my myrrh with my balsam,
I eat my honey with my grape-syrup,
I drink my wine with my milk.
Eat, O friends!
Drink, yea, drink abundantly, my beloved companions!

VII.

The maiden's search for her lover by night, and praise of his beauty.
Ch. v. 2 – vi. 3.

2 *M.* I slept, but my heart was awake;
It was the voice of my beloved, who was knocking:
"Open to me, my sister, my spouse,
My dove, my perfect one!
For my head is filled with dew,
And my locks with the drops of the night."
3 "I have taken off my vest [said I];
How shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet;
How shall I soil them?"
4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
And my heart was moved for him.
5 I rose up to open to my beloved,
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with self-flowing myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt.

6 I opened to my beloved,
But my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone.
I was not in my senses while he spake with me!
I sought him, but could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
7 The watchmen that go about the city found me;
They smote me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls took away from me my veil.
8 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye should find my beloved, —
What will ye tell him? —
That I am sick of love.

9 *V.* What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women!
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thus thou dost charge us?

10 *M.* My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chief among ten thousand.
11 His head is as the most fine gold;
His locks waving palm-branches,
Black as a raven;
12 His eyes are doves by streams of water,
Washed with milk, dwelling in fulness;
13 His cheeks are like a bed of balsam,
Like beds of spices;
His lips are lilies
Dropping self-flowing myrrh;
14 His hands are gold rings set with chrysolite;
His body is wrought-work of ivory, overlaid with sapphires;
15 His legs are marble pillars, resting on pedestals of fine gold;
His aspect is like Lebanon,
Majestic like the cedars;

16 His mouth is sweetness,
His whole being, loveliness.
This is my beloved,
This my friend,
O ye daughters of Jerusalem!

V. Whither is thy beloved gone, thou fairest among women?
Whither has thy beloved betaken himself?
That we may seek him with thee.

2 *M.* My beloved is gone down to his garden,
To the beds of balsam,
To feed in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;
He feeds among the lilies.

VIII.

The lover's praise of the object of his attachment. — Ch. vi. 4-9.

4 Beautiful art thou, my love, as Tirzah,
Lovely as Jerusalem;
But terrible as an army with banners.
5 Turn away thine eyes from me!
They overpower me!

Thy locks are like a flock of goats,
Which lie down upon Gilead.
6 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep,
Which come up from the washing-place,
Of which every one has twins,
And none is barren among them.

7 As a divided pomegranate
Are thy cheeks behind thy veil.

8 Threescore are the queens, and fourscore the concubines,
And the maidens without number.
9 But my dove, my undefiled, is the one;
She is the incomparable one of her mother,
The darling of her that bore her.
The daughters saw her, and blessed her;
The queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

IX.

Conversation between a lover and maiden. — Ch. vi. 10 – viii. 4.

10 *L.* Who is this that looks forth like the morning,
Fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
And terrible as an army with banners?

11 *M.* I went down into the garden of nuts,
To see the green valley,
To see whether the vine blossomed,
And the pomegranates budded.
12 Or ever I was aware,
My soul had made me like the chariots of the prince's train.

13 *V.* Return, return, O Shulamite,
Return, return, that we may look upon thee!

M. Why should ye look upon the Shulamite,
As upon a dance of the hosts?

1 *L.* How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!
The roundings of thy hips are like neck ornaments,
The work of the hands of the artificer;
2 Thy navel is like a round goblet, that wants not the spiced wine;
Thy belly like a heap of wheat, inclosed with lilies;
3 Thy two breasts are like two young twin gazelles;
4 Thy neck is as a tower of ivory;
Thine eyes are like the pools at Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim;
Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus;
5 Thy head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the hair of thy head like purple;
The king is captivated by thy locks.
6 How fair, how pleasant art thou, love, in delights!
7 This thy stature is like the palm-tree,
And thy breasts like clusters of dates.
8 I will go up, say I to myself, upon the palm-tree;
I will take hold of its boughs,
And thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,
And the fragrance of thy nose like apples,
9 And thy mouth like wine ——

M. — that goes down smoothly for my beloved,
Flowing over the lips of them that sleep.
10 I am my beloved's,
And his desire is toward me.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the country;
Let us lodge in the villages!
12 Then will we go early to the vineyards,
To see whether the vine puts forth,

Whether its blossom opens,
And the pomegranates bud forth ;
There will I give thee my love !
13 The love-apples give forth fragrance ;
And at our doors are all kinds of precious fruits, new and old :
I have kept them for thee, my beloved !

1 O that thou wert as my brother,
That sucked the breast of my mother !
When I found thee abroad I might kiss thee,
And for it no one would deride me.
2 I will lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, that thou mayst teach me ;
I will give thee spiced wine to drink, and the juice of my pomegranates.
3 His left hand is under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.

4 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love,
Till he please !

X.

Chorus of virgins, maiden, and lover. — Ch. viii. 5–7.

5 *V.* Who is this that comes up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved ?

M. Under the apple-tree I excited thy love ;
There thy mother brought thee forth ;
There she that bore thee brought thee forth !

6 O, set me as a seal upon thy heart;
As a seal upon thine arm!
For love is strong as death;
True love is firm as the grave;
Its flames are flames of fire,
The fire of Jehovah.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it.
Would a man give all the wealth of his house for love,
It would be utterly contemned.

XI.

A conversation of two brothers about their sister, with her remarks.
Ch. viii. 8–12.

8 *B.* We have a sister who is yet young;
She is yet without breasts.
What shall we do with our sister,
When she shall be spoken for?
9 If she be a wall,
We will build upon it a silver tower;
If she be an open gate,
We will inclose her with doors of cedar.

10 *S.* I am a wall, and my breasts like towers;
Therefore shall I be in his eyes as one that finds peace.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;
He let out the vineyard to keepers;
Every one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for
its fruit.

12 My vineyard is before my eyes.
Be thine the thousand, O Solomon,
And two hundred to the keepers of its fruit!

XII.

The lover sent away. A fragment. — Ch. viii. 13, 14.

13 *L.* Thou that dwellest in the gardens!
Friends listen to thy voice;
Let me hear thee!

14 *M.* Fly, my beloved! like a gazelle, or a young hind,
Upon the mountains of spices.

NOTES.

NOTES

ON

THE PROVERBS.

Ch. I. 1 – 6. These verses seem to be designed as a preface, pointing out the object and use of the book of Proverbs.

2. — *wisdom* — *instruction.* It is impossible to give to these and similar terms a precise definition, which shall apply to all cases in which they are used. For their meaning is more or less extensive and general, according to the connection in which they stand. It may be said, however, that the term rendered *wisdom*, in its most common use in this book, denotes a general knowledge of all those subjects, divine and human, which ought to engage the mind of man; and especially that which may be applied to the conduct of life. It has so extensive a signification, however, as to denote the attributes of God manifested in the creation of the world. The term rendered *instruction* more commonly denotes that knowledge, or education, which relates to morals and manners; but the particular meaning and application of both these terms can be learned only from the context in the passages in which they occur. The same remark applies to the terms *understanding*, *knowledge*, and some others, which are sometimes interchanged with the terms above mentioned. Especially, the connection must show when any of these terms relate to religious subjects, when to moral conduct, and when to knowledge in general. — *words of understanding:* i. e. which come from the intelligent, and tend to make the hearer intelligent.

3. — *instruction of prudence:* i. e. such instruction as tends to make one prudent. — *justice, equity, uprightness.* These terms denote the same thing, and are heaped together in order to give weight to the sentiment.

4. — *to the simple:* i. e. to him who, by reason of inexperience, is liable to be imposed upon. We have an illustration of the kind of simplicity referred to in this proverb in the term *young man*, in the parallel line.

5. *The wise man*, &c. The maxims in this book are designed not only for the inexperienced and ignorant. He that is wise already will not lose his labor in reading it, but will become still wiser.

6. — *deep maxim* — *dark sayings:* i. e. such pointed, concise, figurative, or enigmatical sentences and maxims, as are contained in the book of Proverbs. The Hebrew term מְלִיצָה seems here to denote not *an interpretation*, but *a thing to be interpreted*, i. e. *a deep maxim.* The Sept. has it σκοτεινὸν λόγον. Hodgson renders the term *a mystery.*

7. *The fear of Jehovah.* This expression, according to Scripture usage, evidently has no exclusive reference to the emotion of fear, but to all those sentiments which man ought to entertain towards God. — *beginning of knowledge.* The Hebrew term sometimes denotes the first of its kind, the most excellent part. Hence, the line may be rendered, "The fear of Jehovah is the perfection of knowledge"; and so some critics have rendered it; but as in ch. ix. 10 a different Hebrew word is used, which must be rendered *beginning*, I prefer to understand the line as conveying the idea, that religion is the beginning or foundation of all valuable knowledge, without which men remain ignorant and foolish, however great their attainments in merely human knowledge. The religious man only will become wise. — *Fools:* i. e. impious fools. The idea of impiety was often associated with the Hebrew term.

8. *Hear.* This expression implies attention and obedience. It is the opposite of *neglect*, in the parallel line. — *O my son.* The Hebrews and other Orientals addressed their pupils, hearers, or readers, by the endearing appellation of *son.* The terms *dear reader, friend*, &c., in some modern books, correspond to it.

9. — *graceful wreath* — *chains*, &c.: i. e. they shall, being followed, add more to thy beauty, and win more approbation and favor for thee from God and good men, than any ornaments which thy parents can place upon thy head or around thy neck.

11. — *without cause:* i. e. without the slightest provocation from our victims, but solely from the love of plunder.

12. *Let us swallow them up.* The metaphor drawn from the *lying in wait* of a wild beast is here continued in the language, *let us swallow them up*, i. e. like those monsters which come suddenly upon their prey and wholly devour it, so as to leave no more trace behind than there is of one who is dead, buried, and gone to the under-world. The same idea is expressed in the parallel line.

14. — *thy lot:* i. e. though thou art young, thou shalt have an equal share in the plunder with us veterans of the trade. Thou shalt draw lots with us, whenever we determine, by casting lots, to whom any portion of the plunder we have gained shall belong. See Ps. xxii. 18. — *one purse:* containing the money we obtain, of which all shall have a right to the same share.

17. *For as the net is spread in vain.* Comparing vii. 23, the meaning seems to be, that it is in vain to the silly bird which sees the spreading of the net, and does not take warning from it; and that the exhortation is, not to be so headstrong and incautious as the silly birds, who use to run into the net, although they see the fowler laying it before their eyes. Some, however, refer the words *in vain* to the fowler, and suppose the meaning to be, that the fowler loses his labor who sets his net while the bird is looking on, — because the bird, perceiving the danger, will not come to the bait; and that those who are not warned by the evil consequences of wickedness, which the writer sets forth, are sillier than the birds. While plotting destruction for others, they are blind to the retribution which is sure to fall upon themselves.

19. *It takes away the life*, &c.: i. e. it brings sudden and violent death upon those who have gained possession of it.

20. In opposition to the enticements of the wicked, wisdom is now personified as a teacher, preaching to the sons of men. It is evident from this description, as well as from chapters viii. and ix., that a practical regard to God and duty, as well as a speculative knowledge of divine and human things, is included in the author's idea of wisdom. The circumstance, that wisdom, personified as a teacher, is represented as proclaiming her lessons in the streets, highways, &c., is supposed by some to denote that in active life only is that rich fountain of experience from which wisdom is derived. But it may be doubted whether this particular idea was

in the author's mind. I rather suppose, that, having personified wisdom as a teacher, he represents her as giving her lessons where it was customary for teachers and philosophers in ancient times to give their lessons. If the language implies any thing more, it is, that the lessons of wisdom are within the reach of all, presenting urgent claims to their attention. Bishop Patrick paraphrases verse twentieth thus: — "Let me advise you, therefore, rather to hearken to the manifold instructions of wisdom, whose most excellent counsels you cannot but be as well acquainted withal, as you are with that which is proclaimed in the open streets; for you hear them in the plain dictates of your own consciences, in the laws of God, in the mouth of his prophets and ministers, in the admonitions and examples of good men, and in the course of his providence and wise government, which call upon you more earnestly and loudly than these seducers to follow and obey them."

22. — *simple ones* — *simpleness* — *scoffers* — *fools.* If by these different terms the author refers to different classes of persons, — which may be doubted, — the first class may denote the wicked through inexperience, weakness, and credulity; the second, open scoffers at religion and virtue; the third, hardened irreligious and vicious men, who are yet self-satisfied and regard themselves as wiser than persons of an opposite character.

23. — *pour out:* The mouth of wisdom is represented as a fountain copiously pouring forth its streams. — *my spirit:* i. e. my mind.

24. — *stretched out my hand:* It is more agreeable to usage to understand this as a beckoning gesture, inviting the hearer to come, than as one designed to enforce the language of the speaker, or to offer assistance. See Is. xiii. 2 and lxv. 2.

28. — *early:* literally, in the morning: i. e. with great earnestness and diligence; as those who rise early in the morning for any object are in earnest about it. The meaning of the whole verse is, that the despisers of wisdom will not be able to escape from the calamity in which they are involved.

31. — *eat of the fruit,* &c. "Therefore, as it is just that men should reap what they sow, and eat such fruit as they plant, so these men shall suffer the punishments which their wicked doings naturally produce; nay, be glutted and surfeited with the miserable effects of their own counsels and contrivances." Patrick.

32. — *the falling away of the simple:* i. e. from duty and wisdom. "For let them alone, and they need nobody but them-

selves to destroy them; their escaping dangers only making them more audacious to run into them." Patrick.

Ch. II. 3. — *if thou wilt call aloud*, &c.: i. e. if thou wilt, as it were, give her a strong and pressing invitation to come and take possession of thy soul.

5. *Then shalt thou understand*, &c. In ch. i. 7, he represents religion as the condition of attaining true wisdom. Here he represents religion as the effect of a sincere and earnest search after wisdom.

6. *For Jehovah gives wisdom:* And let no one doubt that he will find true wisdom, if he seek for it in the right way; for God gives it to such as diligently seek for it. Comp. Job xxxii. 8, xxxviii. 36, Dan. ii. 21, James i. 5, 17.

9. *Then shalt thou understand*, &c. This verse is connected in sense with verse 5; verses 6, 7, and 8 being parenthetic.

10. — *wisdom enters* — *knowledge is pleasant*, &c. The language in this verse seems to be borrowed from the entertainment of guests. Wisdom then enters the heart, as her habitation, and is pleasant to one, i. e. is cherished by him as his dearest friend, when it is not merely speculative, but a living, practical principle.

16. — *wife of another:* i. e. the adulteress, who is here not a foreigner; comp. ver. 17. It is commonly said that the adulteress is called *a strange woman*, because that class of people were usually women of foreign origin. It is probable, however, that the term itself often denotes simply one of a strange family, one not belonging to the family of the tempted person.

17. — *friend of her youth:* i. e. the husband to whom she was united when young. — *covenant of her God:* i. e. the marriage covenant, in contracting which, God was called to witness by the parties. Comp. Mal. ii. 14.

18. — *the dead:* רְפָאִים, literally, *the weak;* the shades or ghosts of the dead, which the ancient Hebrews represented as dwelling together in Sheol, destitute of blood and animal life, and therefore weak and languid, like a sick person (Is. xiv. 10), but yet having some faculties, such as perception and memory.

19. — *return again;* — *paths of life.* The image of the preceding verse seems to be continued, and the representation is that it is as difficult for one who has become intimate with an adulteress to recover from the moral and temporal ruin in which he involves himself, as it is for one who has gone down to the place of the dead to return to the land of the living.

21. — *dwell in the land.* To dwell till death in the land of Israel, the glory of all lands, the land of many promises, and not to be driven from it into a foreign country, was considered an inestimable blessing by every true Hebrew. Hence it was used as an image of the highest good. It is often difficult, as in this passage, to decide whether the expression is to be understood in a literal or a figurative sense. In Matt. v. 5, occurs the figurative use of the expression.

Ch. III. 2. — *peace :* i. e. prosperity, satisfaction, that which is the object of every one's desire and pursuit, and that which he wishes for his friend.

3. — *mercy and truth.* On account of the latter clause of the verse, I understand these words as denoting the duties of humanity, sincerity, and justice in man. Others, on account of the use of the terms in other passages to denote the favor of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, understand them in the same sense here; and suppose the pronoun *them*, in the next line, to refer back to *precepts* in verse 1. — *around thy neck :* i. e. let them never be forgotten or neglected, as you cannot fail to see and care for the ornamental chains which you wear around your neck.

5. — *lean not*, &c., as one leans upon a staff. The precept in this line is limited and explained by the preceding parallel line. It is, that no one should trust to gain the ends which he seeks, or to obtain happiness, by his own sagacity and wisdom, without the divine blessing; that the favor of God is more essential to a happy life, than any labored plans which the human understanding can devise.

8. — *thy navel.* This is probably meant to include the adjacent parts. The metaphor is drawn from the practice of the healing art in the East, which made great use of external applications to the stomach and belly. "The navel of an infant is often very clumsily managed in the East. Hence it is no uncommon thing to see that part greatly enlarged and diseased. Reference to the navel, as connected with prosperity, is still common. Has a person risen from poverty to affluence, it is said, His navel is grown much larger. Should he insult the man from whom he derived his prosperity, the latter will ask, Who made your navel to grow?" Roberts. — *moisture to thy bones :* The bones being supposed to be dried up in sickness. See xvii. 22, Job xxi. 24, Ps. cii. 3.

9. *Honor Jehovah*, &c.: i. e. Obey the directions of the law, by bringing thy oblations to the house of God, and offering the first fruits of the harvest and the vintage, in token of thy gratitude and dependence.

18. — *tree of life:* i. e. a tree, the fruits of which lengthen life. It is also probable that the expression has reference to the tree of life in paradise, Gen. ii. 9, iii. 22, here used as the emblem of constant and durable happiness.

20. — *deeps burst forth.* See Job xxxviii. 8, Hab. iii. 9.

22. — *life to thy soul:* i. e. these precepts, being observed, will give thee animation, cheerfulness, and vigor, when other things fail thee. — *grace to thy neck:* i. e. they shall be ornamental to thee, and secure thee favor and admiration more than the neck-chain which is worn to adorn the body. Comp. i. 9.

34. — *treats scornfully.* I suppose this means simply that God will punish the *scorners*, without reference to any particular mode of punishment. So, in the New Testament, we read, "If any man corrupt the temple of God, God will corrupt him"; as it stands in the original. 1 Cor. iii. 17. The particular expressions used, having reference to the sin which is punished, are merely for strength and emphasis. A similar use of threatening language is very common in conversation.

35. — *bear off:* i. e. they shall take it up, and bear it off, as their portion.

Ch. IV. 1. — *of a father.* See the note on i. 8.

4. — *and live.* An emphatic expression, and sufficiently agreeable to the English, as well as the Hebrew, idiom, for "thou shalt live," i. e. live happily.

7. — *principal thing:* i. e. the most excellent of all possessions.

9. See the note on i. 9.

12. — *goest*, — *runnest:* "If thy actions and designs have no other rule, thou shalt be at ease, and free from those straits and difficulties which others meet withal; and, in case thy business shall require haste, this will be the safest, as well as the most inoffensive (if not the shortest), way to accomplish thy ends."

13. — *thy life:* i. e. thy most precious treasure, that upon which all happiness depends.

16. — *caused some to fall:* i. e. to stumble and fall over the stumbling-blocks set in their path. The expression in this verse may denote that the wicked rest not till they have brought some

one to ruin by plunder, &c.; or till they have seduced some one to become a partaker of their wickedness. The former meaning seems to be most favored by the connection.

17. — *bread of wickedness*, — *wine of violence:* i. e. obtained by dishonesty and rapine, and not by honest labors. Others understand the verse as denoting that it is very agreeable to the wicked, like bread and wine to them, to do mischief.

18. — *light of dawn:* i. e. it is full of brightness and joy. Their way shines to themselves, in the joy and comfort of it; before others, in the lustre and honor of it. It is a growing light; it shines more and more; not like the light of a meteor, which soon disappears, or that of a candle, which burns dim, and burns down; but like that of the dawn, which is soon followed by that of the rising sun, which will arrive, in the end, at the perfect day. The light of the dayspring will at length be noonday light, and it is this to which the righteous are pressing forward.

19. — *at what they stumble:* i. e. like travellers in a dark and dangerous road, they are in constant danger of falling into ruin.

21. — *within thy heart:* i. e. as a most precious treasure, which is kept not in an outer apartment, but in the innermost recesses of the house.

23. *For from it goes forth life.* I understand this line to mean, that, as natural life, man's most precious possession, depends upon the heart, so his true happiness, his well-being, depends upon a well regulated mind and well regulated affections. See verse 13.

25. *Let thine eyes look straight forward.* The phraseology of this verse is borrowed from a traveller who keeps fixed in the direction of the road, and does not allow his eyes to wander on one side and the other, lest by so doing he should stumble over a stone, or fall into a hole. The precept points out the necessity of being on our guard against the seductions of the wicked, of directing all our actions by a good intention to a right end, and of not allowing the mind to be diverted from it by any temptations.

Ch. V. 2. — *lips may preserve knowledge:* i. e. not only lay up wisdom for thyself, but be ready to impart it, as thou shalt have opportunity.

4. *But in the end she is*, &c.: literally, But her end is, &c.: i. e. the end to which she leads her victims.

5. — *the under-world.* The meaning is, that the harlot leads those that follow her to an untimely and a miserable end.

6. — *gives no heed :* פֶּן־תְּפַלֵּס, cavet, *ne perpendat.* See Ges. Gramm., p. 288. — *Her paths sink : viæ ejus nutant.* Ges. I have varied the metaphor a little. I suppose the meaning to be that the adulteress is near destruction. She walks in a path that leads to the under-world, or to destruction. The implication is, that she draws her followers with her. — *when she thinks not of it :* i. e. suddenly, unexpectedly, before she is aware of her danger. See Job ix. 25, and the note; or Ges. Lex. on יָדַע. Otherwise, "and she cares not for it." Otherwise, "Her paths wander, she knows not where."

9. — *thy bloom :* i. e. the beauty and strength of thy body. — *thy years :* i. e. thy life. — *others*, &c. The plural may be used as referring not only to the harlot, but her base attendants and children.

11. — *thy flesh and thy body are consumed :* i. e. well-nigh consumed; when thou art reduced to a mere skeleton.

14. *In the midst of the congregation*, &c. : i. e. so as to be a public example and a shameful spectacle to all men. Some suppose that the line has reference to condemnation for adultery in court.

15. *Drink water*, &c. : i. e. Be faithful to thine own marriage bed. Similar images occur in Numb. xxiv. 7; Ps. lxviii. 26; Cant. iv. 12; Is. xlviii. 1; Hos. xiii. 15; Sirach xxvi. 12.

16. — *thy fountains*, &c. : i. e. thy children, which shall be numerous.

17. — *thee alone :* i. e. thou mayst be confident that the children of your wife are truly yours; whereas, the children of harlots are of uncertain paternity. Comp. Sirach xxvi. 19–21.

18. — *thy fountain :* i. e. thy wife. — *shall be blessed :* i. e. have a numerous offspring. Comp. Ps. cxxviii. 3.

19. *A lovely hind, a graceful mountain-goat.* The Arabs have the proverbial expression, — "More beautiful than the ibex, or mountain-goat." See Bochart, Tom. II., p. 899. It appears also from Bochart that the ibex was domesticated for amusement, as a lovely creature which they delighted to adorn with chains, garlands, &c. Roberts, ad loc., says, "The hind is celebrated for affection to her mate; hence, in the East, a man, in speaking of his wife, often calls her by that name." Comp. Cant. ii. 9, &c.

21. — *the eyes*, &c. The most secret sins, such as that condemned in this chapter, are known to God, as well as the most public transgressions.

22. — *catch — cords*, &c. The image is borrowed from the condition of a wild beast, or bird, caught in the nets of the hunter. The inevitable miseries, or punishment, of transgression are set forth. It brings a man into captivity to misery.

23. — *he shall stagger*. This is designed to denote the same event as *die*, in the parallel line; and the accessory idea of staggering or reeling into the grave seems to denote the blindness, folly, and infatuation of the sensualist.

Ch. VI. 1. — *stricken hands*. This expression denotes the same thing as the expression *become a surety*, in the parallel line. If, by giving thy hand to a creditor in presence of the debtor, thou hast become responsible for the debt of the latter.

2. — *ensnared*. Comp. ver. 5.

3. — *fallen into the hands*, &c. This may denote that the surety has placed himself at the mercy of the debtor, who, by neglect or misfortune, may expose him to the payment of the debt; or at the mercy of the creditor. From what follows, the first seems the more probable explanation. — *prostrate thyself*, &c.: i. e. earnestly entreat the debtor, for whom you have become bound, to pay the debt, and thus release you from the obligation which you have assumed.

5. — *as a gazelle*. The comparison may refer to the anxiety and the efforts of the gazelle to extricate itself, or to the speed with which it runs away. The fleetness of the animal is proverbial in the countries which it inhabits. See Robinson's Calmet, art. *Antelope*.

7. — *overseer*, &c. The diligence of the ant is the more remarkable, as it has no overseer to exact its labor. It is worth mentioning, that Aristotle, having spoken of cranes, bees, and ants as living in a political state, says that the two former lived under a ruler, the latter not.

8. — *in the summer her food*: as a provision for winter. The illustration is borrowed from what was a universal notion in ancient times respecting the ant. But the ant is now supposed to pass the winter, in cold climates, in a torpid state.

10. *A little sleep*, &c. This verse is to be regarded as the expostulation of the sluggard, when called upon to leave his bed.

11. — *like a robber*: i. e. swiftly, unexpectedly, irresistibly. Comp. ver. 15.

12. *A worthless wretch*: literally, a man of Belial. An expres-

sion denoting mingled abhorrence and contempt, the most reproachful epithet which one Hebrew could apply to another.

13. — *winks with his eyes:* who intimates, by signs with the eyes, hands, or feet, the base designs which he is afraid or ashamed to express in plain words, or which he wishes to conceal from persons who are present. — *Speaks with his feet,* — *teaches with his fingers.* Roberts, in his Illustrations (p. 366), observes, — "When the Easterns are in their houses, they wear no sandals, so their feet and toes are exposed. When guests wish to speak with each other so as not to be observed by the host, they convey their meaning by the feet and toes. Does a person wish to leave a room with another, he lifts up one of his feet; and should the other refuse, he also lifts up a foot, and then suddenly puts it down on the ground." "When merchants wish to bargain in presence of others without making known their terms, they sit on the ground, have a piece of cloth thrown over the lap, and then put each a hand under, and thus speak with their fingers. When the Brahmins convey religious mysteries to their disciples, they teach with their fingers, having the hands concealed in the folds of their robes."

16. — *six* — *seven.* This mode of enumeration is found in other parts of the Old Testament, as also in the sententious compositions of the Arabs and Persians. See Ros. ad. loc. Comp. xxx. 18, 29; Job v. 19; Eccles. xi. 2.

17. *Lofty eyes:* i. e. pride, haughtiness.

21. — *around thy neck.* See i. 9, iii. 3, and the note.

22. — *they shall guide:* i. e. the commandment and the precepts, ver. 20.

23. — *to life:* i. e. to true, solid, lasting happiness; so misery is expressed by the term *death.*

25. — *catch thee,* &c.: i. e. suffer not thyself to be caught in the nets of her wanton eyes. Perhaps the eyelids in particular are mentioned, because it was the custom in the East to paint them. See note on Jer. iv. 30.

26. — *precious life:* i. e. shortens life by starvation, in reference to the parallel line; or by the jealousy of the husband (see 33–35), or in some other way.

30. — *overlook:* i. e. do not let him go unpunished, though he may plead an excuse, which the adulterer cannot. The thief had no food, and stole some; the adulterer had a wife, or might have had, and yet went in to his neighbour's wife.

35. — *content:* to remit the penalty of death. See Lev. xx. 10.

Ch. VII. 3. — *upon thy fingers:* like a ring, which is not out of sight, and which is kept with the utmost care.

4. *Say to wisdom*, &c.: Be as well acquainted, as familiar, with wisdom as with a beloved sister. Comp. Job xvii. 14.

8. — *her corner.* The expression here probably denotes the house of the harlot, as is suggested by the parallel line; and not merely her temporary station, as in ver. 12.

11. — *ungovernable.* The term is applied in Hosea, iv. 16, to an untamed heifer.

14. — *have been upon me:* i. e. a vow to pay them has been upon me. These thank-offerings, or peace-offerings, consisted of oxen, sheep, or goats, which were offered in acknowledgment of some blessings received. Considerable portions of these victims used to be returned by the priests to those who offered them, and afforded materials for a feast, to which they used to invite their neighbours and friends.

22. — *as one in fetters to the chastisement of the fool.* "One in fetters" corresponds to the ox in the parallel line, and denotes the unresisting spirit and the forgetfulness, or disregard of consequences, with which the young man follows the allurements of forbidden pleasure. There can be no doubt of the incorrectness of the common version of this line. It is as inconsistent with the Hebrew idiom and construction as it is inappropriate to the connection. For a defence of the version which I have adopted, I refer to Buxtorf's Lexicon, or Gesenius's Thesaurus, on the term עֶכֶס. Dr. Thomas Hunt, in his Observations on Proverbs, adopting an ingenious conjectural reading, namely, איל for אויל, translates the line, *as the hart bounds into the toils.* It makes a good sense; and, were the conjectural reading the only difficulty in the way, I should be inclined to adopt it, with Rosenmüller and others. But there is no Hebrew usage according to which מוּסַר can mean *toils*, or עֶכֶס, *bounds.* To express the meaning of *toils*, or *bounds*, different Hebrew terms would have been used. It seems to me, therefore, that the ingenious translation of Dr. Hunt must be rejected, as not authorized by the original.

Ch. VIII. 1. — *wisdom.* It is difficult to conceive that any one who attends to what is said of wisdom in the book of Proverbs, and compares this chapter with ch. i. 20, &c., iii. 13, 20, and ix. 1–6, should fail to perceive that the author personifies the attribute of wisdom; that he represents wisdom as a female and a queen, dispensing her rewards to those who gain her acquaintance, and the assistant of the Almighty in the creation of the world. Respecting the theory, that the author describes a real person, the Messiah, or Jesus Christ, it is sufficient to say, that there is no proof of it, either in this book or in any part of the Old or New Testament; and of course it devolves upon those who maintain that any thing more than the attribute of wisdom is described to prove it. For what the author professes to describe is *wisdom*. Comp. Job xxviii. 25–28. Adam Clarke remarks, on this verse: — "Here wisdom is again personified; but the prosopopœia is carried on to a greater length than before, and with much more variety. It is represented in this chapter in a twofold point of view: — 1. Wisdom, the power of judging rightly, implying the knowledge of divine and human things. 2. As an attribute of God, particularly displayed in the various and astonishing works of creation. Nor has it any other meaning in this whole chapter, whatever some of the fathers may have dreamed, who find allegorical meanings everywhere."

2. — *top of the high places:* where heralds often made their proclamations. Comp. Luke xii. 3.

9. — *direct:* easy to be understood by those who love knowledge, in opposition to *crooked*, in ver. 8.

12. — *dwell with prudence:* i. e. between wisdom and prudence there is an intimate union. Those who have wisdom will have sound discretion in the conduct of life.

13. In connection with the discourse in praise of wisdom, this verse seems to mean, that with true wisdom is connected that fear of God which leads to holiness of life; in other words, that the wise man will manifest his religion in his life. Comp. 1 John iv. 20.

14. *Counsel:* The capacity of managing difficult affairs, and bringing them to a successful issue. — *I have strength.* So Eccles. vii. 19, "Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten mighty men," &c.

15. — *kings reign:* i. e. the thrones of kings can be securely established, and the regal duties successfully discharged, only upon the principles of true wisdom.

17. *I love them*, &c.: The lovers and seekers of wisdom shall attain it, and the blessings which it confers.

18. — *are with me:* i. e. in order to be bestowed upon those who seek and find me. Comp. iii. 16.

22. — *formed me*, &c. *Formed*, or *created*, is the primary meaning of the verb קָנָה. See Gesenius's Thesaurus. It is so translated by the Sept., Chaldee, and old Syriac version. Thus, also, in Gen. xiv. 19, "The most high God, who made heaven and earth," the same word is used. So, also, in Deut. xxxii. 6, "Is he not thy father, that created thee?" So, Ps. cxxxix. 13, "Thou hast created my reins." The meaning *created*, or *formed*, seems also to be confirmed by ver. 25, "Before the hills, *I was brought forth*." See, also, the Son of Sirach, ch. xxiv. 9. At the time when *wisdom*, in this passage, was regarded as a real person, and not a mere rhetorical personification of an attribute, there was a controversy between the Arians and Athanasians, whether the term in question should be rendered *created* or *possessed*. Some of the latter contended that ἔκτισε was a corrupt reading of the Sept. for ἐκτήσατο, and some that the passage related to the human nature of Christ. Since the true view has prevailed, that wisdom is only personified, the rendering *created*, or *formed*, has been regarded as more agreeable to the connection. — *the first of his creation*: i. e. the first production of his operating, creative energy; i. e. when Jehovah *went forth*, or *proceeded*, to create the world, when he commenced his *way*, *course*, or *process*, of creation, I was his first production. He raised me up to be his assistant in producing a well ordered world out of chaos. In Job, xxvi. 14, xl. 19, the term דֶּרֶךְ, *way*, in the plural, denotes *the works* of God. The term *first* has reference to time chiefly, but has connected with it the idea of superiority or excellence. It is the same term which is used in Gen. xlix. 3, "Reuben, thou art my first-born, the firstling of my strength." It is also the term which is applied to the *first fruits* offered in the temple; Lev. ii. 12, xxiii. 10; Deut. xviii. 4, xxvi. 10. The term is also used to denote *the chief* of its kind, dropping the idea of priority in time. Thus, the river-horse is called *the chief* of the works (literally, *ways*) of God. As to the plain, literal meaning of the verse, and of the following passage, it is simply that wisdom was exercised, or put forth, as the antecedent condition of the production of the world, or that the world was made by the wisdom of God, as in Jer. li. 15, "He established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding he spread out the heavens." So Prov. iii. 19; Ps. civ. 24; Job xxviii. 25–28. God's *putting forth* of wisdom being regarded as antecedent in time to the actual creation of the visible world, the author, who had previously represented wisdom as having length of days in her

right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor, here, by a bold figure, personifies wisdom as being formed to be the assistant, counsellor, and, as it were, architect of the Deity, in the formation of the world out of chaos. This bold personification is perfectly agreeable to the genius of the Hebrew poets, who represent Zion as "stretching out her hands, having none to comfort her," and the inanimate ways which lead to the temple, as "mourning because none came to the solemn feasts," and the trees of the field as "clapping their hands," in token of joy when the ransomed of Jehovah returned to Zion. See the note on ver. 1. The design of the author is to give the very highest praise of wisdom, by representing it as not confined to common affairs, not even to the office of kings, and as not being of modern or human origin; but that it was older than the creation, and that without its aid the Almighty formed no part of his works. The eulogies upon law by Cicero and Hooker proceeded from a similar train of thought. See Cicero de Legibus, Lib. II., cap. 4, and Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, at the end of Book I., where we read,—"Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." The writer's idea of the *creation* of wisdom belongs merely to the rhetorical personification of it. Before we can conceive of wisdom as waiting upon the Deity as a person, we must suppose her created. But the simple idea on which the personification was founded is, that the exercise of wisdom by God preceded the creation of the world, as the condition of its order and beauty.

23. — *anointed:* Wisdom is the most ancient queen in the world. God himself anointed her as such, before the origin of the visible world.

27. — *drew a circle,* &c.: i. e. by causing the apparently concave surface of the sky to form a curved boundary to the waters which surrounded the earth, according to the opinion of the ancients. Comp. Job xxvi. 10.

29. — *border:* i. e. the shore of the sea. —*foundations:* The earth is here represented as a house or building having foundations, &c.

30. — *as a master-builder:* This meaning of the term אָמוֹן, I regard as on the whole better supported by usage, comp. Cant. vii. 2, and by the scope and connection of the passage, than the meaning *foster-child*, which is preferred by some critics. The termination of the Hebrew term is masculine, for which an obvious reason may be given, if it denotes *an artist* or *architect*, and none if it denote *a foster-child.* It appears most consistent with the general design of the passage, or with what we must suppose to be its literal meaning, to understand wisdom to be represented as the counsellor, as it were, the architect of the Deity, in the formation and furnishing of the world. As to the term *exult*, which, according to a more literal translation, would be *play*, *sport*, or *dance*, which is thought to be more favorable to the rendering *foster-child*, I suppose it refers to the exultation of wisdom in the abundant, and, as it were, lavish, manifestation of her skill, and the ease with which she exercised it; perhaps it may even refer to the pleasure with which the Deity is represented as looking upon the work of each day of creation. " And God saw that it was good." In the book of Job, to denote the terrible nature of the crocodile, it is said, — " In his neck dwells strength, and terror dances before him." The rendering *master-builder*, or *architect*, is favored by the Sept. and Vulg., *ἁρμόζουσα ;* cuncta *componens.* Luther, also, renders the term *werk-meister*, *master-workman.*

31. *Exulting*, &c. This verse is well paraphrased by Patrick. " More particularly I displayed my skill in the vast variety of creatures wherewith I have beautified this earth wherein you dwell, which afford a most delightful spectacle unto me, and unto all wise observers; who may see that above all the rest my principal thoughts were fixed upon the children of men, Gen. i. 26, in whom I delighted exceedingly, beholding them made in the image of God and after his likeness, capable to converse with me."

34. — *watches at my gates day by day :* I suppose the language to be borrowed from the practice of those persons in the East who waited at the doors of rulers, or persons of eminence, in order to be admitted to their presence, or to speak to them, as they came out, and thus gain the favors which they had in view. Others suppose the language to be borrowed from the case of a lover, waiting at the door of his mistress, or of scholars at the door of a school.

35. — *finds life :* i. e. the greatest blessing, true happiness.

36. — *love death :* i. e. behave as though they courted their own destruction.

Ch. IX. 1. — *builded her house.* By a personification somewhat different from the preceding, wisdom is represented as a queen, having built a splendid palace, and prepared a rich feast, to which she invites the sons of men, who will receive no less life, vigor, strength, and joy, from her instructions, than the body does, when it partakes of a liberal and most delicious feast. — *seven pillars.* *Seven* was regarded as the full, perfect, and sacred number, not only by the Hebrews, but by the Arabians and Persians.

2. — *mixed her wine:* i. e. either with spices, to make it strong and well flavored, as in ch. xxiii. 30, or with water, to make it more refreshing and wholesome.

3. — *maidens.* Wisdom being represented as a female, of course her attendants are maidens. — *She cries aloud:* i. e. by means of her messengers.

7. — *shame;* — *a stain:* i. e. by being the object of the scoffer's reproaches and maledictions. It is the part of an enlightened conscience and a sound judgment to decide when admonition may be offered with the prospect of doing good. Comp. Matt. vii. 6.

12. — *bear it:* i. e. the consequences or punishment of thy scoffing.

13. *The foolish woman.* This may be intended as a personification of folly, so as to form a contrast with the preceding personification of wisdom. But as the term *woman* is expressly mentioned, and as the description, especially in ver. 17, 18, compared with ch. ii. 18, v. 5, is that of a harlot, and as in this book the transition is frequent from discoursing of wisdom to warning against harlots, see ch. ii. 16, v. 3, vii. 5, it is more probable that a literal harlot, rather than a personification of folly as a harlot, may be here intended.

17. — *bread,* &c. Comp. ch. xxx. 20.

18. — *the dead are there:* i. e. the shades, or ghosts. See ch. ii. 18, and the note. The foolish man does not consider that by entering the house of the harlot he joins himself to the company of the shades in the under-world; i. e. he brings destruction upon himself.

Ch. X. 1. *The Proverbs,* &c. With this chapter begins the collection of proverbs properly so called, i. e. aphorisms following each other without connection. Hence the new title; the preceding part being regarded as an introduction to the proper proverbs. Perhaps, too, they may have once existed in a separate collection.

2. *Treasures of wickedness :* wealth gained by unjust means. Ill got, ill spent. — *righteousness delivers*, &c. Some, without necessity, understand this term as referring particularly to beneficence, as it sometimes does.

3. — *craving :* i. e. the avaricious desires of those who make haste to be rich, even by unjust means.

5. — *gathers :* i. e. the fruits of the earth. — *son causing shame :* i. e. one who disgraces himself and his family by his folly, and the poverty and misery which are the consequences of it.

6. — *cover the mouth*, &c. The wicked man's violence may be said, in its consequences or punishment, to cover *his mouth*, instead of himself or his head, either because his mouth is the instrument of his deception and fraud, or because he will be struck dumb by the woes and disgrace which are brought upon him, so that he can say nothing for himself. *To cover the mouth* is also mentioned as a sign of mourning. Ezek. xxiv. 17.

7. — *rot :* and of course be offensive and loathsome.

8. — *the foolish talker :* i. e. who is so full of his own talk as not to listen to the advice of the wise. — *falls headlong :* i. e. involves himself in danger and trouble.

9. — *perverts his ways :* i. e. turns aside from the right way into crooked by-paths ; i. e. practises deceit and fraud.

10. — *winks with the eye*, &c. : i. e. the silent language of knavery is as pernicious or more so, than the undisguised perpetration of it. See ch. vi. 13, and the note.

11. — *fountain of life :* i. e. utters what is useful and wholesome to himself and others, whilst the mouth of the wicked utters violence or injustice, which at last falls upon himself, and causes him to mourn. See ver. 6, and the note.

12. — *covers all offences :* i. e. overlooks, puts them out of sight, or forgives them.

13. The drift of this proverb seems to be, that the wise man is prudent in his words, and receives no blows, whilst the foolish man by imprudent speeches provokes and receives chastisement.

14. — *treasure up :* i. e. do not let out every thing without regard to time or place, but reserve it for a fit opportunity, while the fool seldom opens his mouth but it proves a swift mischief to himself.

15. — *strong city:* i. e. he places confidence in it. — *is dismay*, &c.: i. e. takes away their spirit and courage.

16. — *to life:* i. e. to true happiness. The meaning *ruin*, in the parallel line, may be derived from the primary meaning of חַטָּאת, or it may be used as the consequence or punishment of sin, by a common idiom.

18. — *hides hatred:* i. e. by friendly deportment to the object of hatred. Disguised hatred and open slander are both condemned.

21. — *feed many:* i. e. strengthen and nourish them for the enjoyment of true happiness by their discourses.

23. — *has wisdom:* i. e. which keeps him from mischief, and makes him rather find happiness in doing well.

24. *The fear of the wicked:* i. e. That which he fears.

25. — *whirlwind:* "Though the wicked, like a whirlwind, may bluster terribly, and overthrow all that stands in his way, yet he quickly vanishes, and destroys himself by his own violence." Patrick. — *everlasting foundation:* i. e. he is safe; his happiness is secure.

26. — *sluggard:* A dilatory, faithless agent or messenger causes the utmost vexation, by keeping his employers in suspense and anxiety.

30. — *the land.* See ch. ii. 21, 22, and the note.

31. — *yields wisdom:* i. e. abundantly and constantly; therefore he shall not be cut down, but be cherished and prosper; while he that uses his tongue perversely shall be cut down like a tree that cumbers the ground.

Ch. XI. 2. — *humble is wisdom.* If we interpret this in connection with the parallel line, the idea is, that the humble man is wise, inasmuch as he escapes the pain and shame which often follow pride.

4. — *the day of wrath:* i. e. the time when God brings judgments or punishment upon men for their sins.

7. — *the expectation*, &c.: i. e. death utterly destroys all his plans and projects; whatever he expected to accomplish.

11. — *blessing of the upright:* their words, their wise counsels and admonitions, which operate as a blessing.

12. — *despises his neighbour*, &c. "It is a great weakness to speak contemptuously of any man, or to render him ridiculous (for no man is so mean but he is sensible of despisal, and may find ways to show his resentment); therefore a thoroughly prudent per-

son, whatsoever he thinks of others, says nothing to their reproach." Patrick.

16. Beauty and gracefulness of manners are to women what strength and valor are to men.

17. — *good to himself:* i. e. by the satisfaction which he enjoys, and by the favor which he wins. — *his own flesh:* i. e. himself. Some critics, as Rosenmüller and Umbreit, render this verse as follows: —

> "He that does good to himself is a merciful man;
> But he that troubles his own flesh is cruel";

i. e. He that enjoys the bounties of providence freely is likely to be generous to others; while he who denies himself the common enjoyments and even necessaries of life is likely to be cruel to others. Comp. Sirach xiv. 5, 6. On the ground of grammatical construction, either rendering is allowable.

18. — *deceitful wages:* i. e. which disappoint his expectations, or even bring pain instead of pleasure.

> "Ye plough wickedness, ye shall reap wretchedness;
> Ye shall eat unlooked-for fruit." Hos. x. 13.

21. *Through all generations:* literally, *Hand to hand.* That I have given the true meaning is probable from the parallel line, and from the circumstance, that a similar phraseology is in use among the Persians, as has been shown by Schultens ad loc. See, also, Gesen. Thesaurus on יָד.

22. — *jewel of gold.* The Hebrew ladies wore rings suspended from the nostril by a hole bored through it; a custom which still prevails in the East. Is. iii. 21, Ezek. xvi. 12. Paul Lucas, as quoted by Bishop Lowth, speaking of a village a little this side of the Euphrates, says, "They have almost all of them the nose bored, and wear in it a great ring." — *without discretion.* Probably a dissolute woman is intended. "She may have the ornament, her mien may be graceful and her person attractive; but without the matchless jewel of virtue, she is like the swine, with a gem in his nose, wallowing in the mire. 'The most beautiful ornament of a woman is virtue.' Tamul proverb." Roberts.

23. — *desire of the righteous,* &c.: i. e. the desires and expectations of the righteous shall not be disappointed, but shall terminate in good, while the expectation of the wicked shall end in their punishment or ruin. Comp. Job xi. 20.

26. — *keeps back:* i. e. in order to obtain an exorbitant price for it in a time of scarcity. — *sells it:* i. e. at a reasonable price, without taking advantage of the necessities of the people.

27. — *seeks favor:* i. e. by seeking to do good, he shall obtain favor. — *seeks mischief:* i. e. to do mischief.

28. — *shall fall:* as a withered leaf. — *as a leaf:* i. e. a verdant leaf, receiving its proper nourishment from the tree.

29. — *harasses his household*, &c.: i. e. by exacting of them excessive labor, refusing them proper food, and treating them with unkindness and severity, thus alienating their affections, and rendering them careless of his interest. — *inherit wind:* i. e. find nothing but disappointment and vanity.

30. *The fruit*, &c.: i. e. the benefit which men receive from a righteous man, &c. — *winneth souls:* i. e. the wise man *captivates* others by his wisdom, and leads them to imitate him.

31. *Behold, the righteous*, &c.: i. e. they are punished for those occasional offences which through infirmity they commit; much more shall the habitually wicked he punished for the sins which they commit, not through infirmity, but with a high hand.

Ch. XII. 1. — *loves correction:* he who is not only willing to receive instruction, but even admonition and rebuke, shows that he is a true lover of knowledge, by accepting the terms, however unwelcome, by which alone it can be obtained.

3. — *root of the righteous*, &c.: i. e. "But the righteous, like a tree that hath taken a deep root in the earth, though shaken by storms and tempests, shall remain unmovable in a flourishing state." Patrick.

4. — *good wife*, &c. See ch. xxxi. 10–31. "A wife that strenuously employs herself in her domestic affairs, and can prudently command her own passions and desires, is a singular ornament and honor to her husband, who may well glory in his happiness; but she, whose laziness, or lasciviousness, or other infamous quality, make him hang down his head for shame, is an incurable grief and vexation, consuming him and all that he hath." Patrick.

6. *The words of the wicked*, &c. This sentiment may have particular reference here to high dignitaries, attendants at the courts of princes, &c.

7. — *house of the righteous*, &c.: i. e. his family shall be established in durable succession.

9. — *demeans himself*, &c.: i. e. He is far happier who makes no show in the world, but has a competent estate, so as to be able to maintain a servant, than he who appears in great splendor and pomp abroad, but wants bread to eat when he is at home. The first line may, though less probably, be rendered, *He that demeans himself, and is a servant to himself.*

10. — *desires of his beast:* in regard to food, rest, &c., much more of his servants, dependents, &c. — *tender mercies:* literally, *the bowels* of the wicked; i. e. which in others are the seat of pity, in him are hardened and shut up, and only stir him up to cruelty. Instead of that mercy which is natural to other men, he has nothing but cruelty. Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 12.

11. — *tills*, &c.: an example of any honest employment. —*follows*, &c. i. e. but he that is idle, falling into the company of loose and wicked persons, will find, at last, that he wants not only bread, but understanding.

12. — *prey of evil-doers:* i. e. such prey, or unlawful gain, as is obtained by evil-doers. — *yields fruit:* both for his own use, and that of others.

13. *In the transgression of the lips is a dangerous snare:* i. e. He who seeks to injure another by false and malicious speeches will be sure to bring himself into difficulty and trouble by such a course; while the man of truth and sincerity escapes such evils.

14. *By the fruit*, &c.: i. e. He that employs his mouth with rectitude and benevolence shall be satisfied with the fruit or happy consequences of such a course, and for whatever good a man effects with his hands he shall receive an ample reward.

15. — *own eyes:* i. e. A fool is so conceited, that he consults nobody but himself; for, whatever he does, in his own opinion he is always in the right; but a wise man will not rely upon his own judgment alone, but, suspecting himself, will make use of the sound advice of other men.

16. — *instantly known:* i. e. he cannot defer showing his resentments; like a brute, he immediately manifests it by his looks, words, and actions. — *hides insult:* i. e. overlooks it, bears it with patience, as beneath his resentment; or, as some suppose, seems to take no notice of it at the time, because he designs afterwards to revenge it.

17. *He that speaks truth*, &c. i. e. He who is accustomed to speak truth in common conversation may be depended upon as a witness in court.

18. — *speaks rashly*, &c. This remark seems to refer to that sort of persons who deeply wound the feelings of others by thoughtless, unguarded remarks, without respect to persons, times, and places. — *is health:* i. e. tends to promote mental peace and happiness.

19. *The lip of truth*, &c. This verse probably denotes not merely that falsehood is speedily detected, whilst the truth is established, but rather that the speaker of truth shall be established in peace and happiness, while the liar shall be brought to ruin. See ch. x. 31.

20. *Deceit*, &c. It has been inferred from the antithetic line in this verse, that by *deceit* is intended self-deception or disappointment. But, as the term is connected with the adjunct *in the heart*, I think it better to understand it in the most obvious sense, of deceit practised towards others, which will not terminate in the joy which is promised, in the next line, to those who counsel peace, but rather in vexation of spirit.

23. — *conceals his knowledge:* i. e. is not ostentatious of it, displays it only at a proper season, is modest; but a fool publishes his ignorance, as if he were ambitious that every one should know how great a fool he is.

26. *The righteous becomes superior*, &c.: i. e. though his station in life may be inferior, he is more successful, does not fail of his ends, is not led astray, as is the case with the bad man, as described in the parallel line. Gesenius, who is followed by several critics, translates the line, *The righteous shows his neighbour the way*. I prefer the old translation, which is that of the Chaldee paraphrast, and is supported by Buxtorf, Michaelis, and Rosenmüller, to so uncertain and even forced a meaning of the term יָתֵר. See Gesen. on תוּר.

27. — *takes not*, &c.: i. e. makes not effort enough to secure that which is almost within his power; is not active enough to be successful in any pursuit. Otherwise, *takes not his venison:* i. e. gets not enough to maintain himself from day to day.

28. — *life;* — *death*. It is evident that these terms are used metaphorically to denote *true happiness*, and *ruin* or *misery*.

Ch. XIII. 2. — *fruit of a man's mouth*, &c. He that makes a good use of his mouth in speaking of others, giving good advice, or making wise observations, will reap the benefit of it himself.

— *appetite*, &c.: i. e. the wicked shall suffer the violence which they meditated against others.

3. — *opens wide:* i. e. speaks rashly and inconsiderately; lets out every thing which comes into his head.

5. — *is loathsome:* i. e. by uttering falsehoods.

7. — *has nothing*, &c. "You will be deceived, if you judge of men by the outward appearance; for there are those who have the vanity to make a great show in the world, when they are not worth a farthing; and others who are so cunning as to dissemble their vast estates under the garb of poverty." Patrick. Under the despotic governments of the East, where property is insecure, there exist many motives for the concealment of it. Comp. ch. xii. 9.

8. — *the ransom of his life.* This line may be understood in different senses, as denoting either the inconvenience, or the value, of wealth. According to the first, the meaning will be, that wealth has not so great an advantage over poverty as is sometimes thought, since it sometimes exposes its possessor, by means of false accusers, or thieves, or tyrants, to the peril of his life, which he is obliged to redeem by the sacrifice of his riches, while no one thinks it worth while to bring accusations against the poor. Or, the line may point out the value of wealth, namely, that it enables its possessor to preserve his life when in imminent danger. The parallelism seems to favor the first meaning.

9. — *shall rejoice:* i. e. shine with a bright, cheerful light, like that of the sun, as described in Ps. xix. 5; i. e. their prosperity shall be great and lasting.

10. *By pride*, &c. "They that have a high conceit of themselves, and will yield to none, declare their folly, in that they can do nothing without strife and contention." Patrick.

11. *Wealth dwindles away*, &c.: i. e. if no care be taken to preserve it, nor industry used in adding to it. The produce of the soil seems to be specially had in view. — *gathers*, &c. i. e. is himself active in gathering his corn into storehouses, and preserving it there.

12. — *tree of life.* See ch. iii. 18, and the note.

13. — *the word:* i. e. of God. But it is uncertain whether it refers to the written word, or to the admonition of the authorized ministers of God.

15. *A good understanding:* i. e. manifesting itself in inoffensive words and virtuous actions. — *is hard:* i. e. instead of winning

favor, it provokes the enmity and opposition of men, and thus leads to vexation and misery.

16. — *acts with knowledge:* i. e. with due deliberation, undertaking only what he understands. — *spreads abroad his folly:* i. e. by rashly and inconsiderately undertaking things beyond his strength, which of course do not succeed.

17. — *into trouble:* i. e. receives punishment for his perfidy or negligence. — *is health*, i. e. by accomplishing the objects of his mission, procures safety and benefit both for himself and him that sent him.

19. — *an abomination*, &c.: i. e. this is the case, although the sure consequence of continuing in their wicked course is disappointment and failure.

22. — *for the just:* i. e. in the course of Providence is transferred from the families of the wicked to those of the good.

23. — *land of the poor.* A poor man often grows rich by honest labor in tillage or other employments, and there are those who, despising labor, lose large estates by dishonest attempts to increase them.

Ch. XIV. 1. — *wise woman*, &c. "By a prudent wife, one pious, industrious, and considerate, the affairs of the family are made to prosper, debts are paid, portions raised, the children well educated and maintained, and the family has comfort within doors and credit without. Thus is the house built. She looks upon it as her own to take care of, though she knows it is her husband's to bear rule in; Esth. i. 22; while a foolish woman, the reverse of her that has been described, will as certainly be the ruin of her house, as if she plucked it down with her own hands." Henry.

2. — *in uprightness*, &c. "By this we may know a man that has grace and the fear of God reigning in him; *he walks in his uprightness;* he makes conscience of his actions, is faithful both to God and man, and every stop he makes, as well as every step he makes, is by rule; here is one that honors God. But, on the contrary, *he that is perverse in his ways*, that wilfully follows his own appetites and passions, that is unjust and dishonest, and contradicts his profession in his conversation, however he may pretend to devotion, he is a wicked man, and will be reckoned with as a despiser of God himself." Henry.

3. — *a scourge of his pride.* "A fool is so insolent, that he

boldly calumniates and wounds the reputation of others, though it come home at last with a terrible back-blow upon himself; but wise men are careful of their words not to offend, much less abuse, the meanest person; and thereby they remain in safety." Patrick.

4. — *no oxen :* i. e. employed in agriculture by the husbandman. — *the fodder-loft is clean.* This is a satirical way of saying that the barn is destitute of fodder; there is a scarcity of provision. So cleanness of teeth denotes a scarcity in Amos iv. 6. "This shows the folly of those who addict themselves to the pleasures of the country, but do not mind the business of it; who, as we say, keep more horses than kine, more dogs than swine; their families must needs suffer by it."

5. *A faithful witness*, &c. "A person of integrity will not be prevailed withal, either for fear or favor, to justify the least untruth; but a man of no conscience, who hath accustomed himself to lying, cares not how many falsehoods he testifies; which he utters without any difficulty." Patrick.

6. — *scoffer — man of understanding.* By *scoffer* seems to be denoted a frivolous, superficial, irreverent inquirer, one inclined to turn serious things into ridicule; and by *man of understanding*, a man who has correct feelings as well as a sound mind. In order to arrive at truth, we must seek it with right views, dispositions, and feelings.

8. — *his way*, &c. "The greatest cunning and subtlety that a truly wise and good man studies is to understand what he ought to do, and what to avoid, upon all occasions; but all the skill of wicked men, such is their folly, lies in cheating tricks, and in devising arts of circumvention and deceit." Patrick.

9. — *make a mock*, &c. Bad men make no account of injuring their neighbours, and therefore incur general hatred; while upright men, by being careful not to do wrong to any one, obtain general favor. This proverb, like many others, is somewhat enigmatical. The evil consequence of the course of conduct mentioned in the first line being implied in what is said of an opposite course of conduct in the parallel line.

10. *The heart*, &c. Every one has griefs and joys, the causes of which he cannot make known so as to secure the complete sympathy of others. Men should be slow, therefore, in passing censure upon their neighbours on account of their feelings of grief or joy.

12. — *a way*, &c. "Examine every thing strictly and impartially, and be not led merely by the appetite; for that makes many

actions seem innocent, which, in the issue, prove deadly destructive." Patrick.

13. *Even in laughter*, &c. This proverb may denote that men sometimes put on the appearance of joy, while their hearts are full of pain, which still recurs after all the efforts to disguise it. Or, the meaning may be, that immoderate joy leaves the heart sad, and that sorrow treads so close upon the heels of joy, that it may be said to follow it immediately.

14. — *with his own ways:* i. e. with the fruit, or evil consequences, of his course of life. — *from himself:* i. e. from his works; from his temper of mind, course of life, and the natural consequences of it.

15. — *to his steps:* i. e. proceeds cautiously, examining before he trusts, and considering well before he does as he is advised.

16. — *fears:* i. e. the consequences of transgression, especially when he is reminded of them by a friend. — *is haughty:* when he is warned, &c.

18. — *inherit folly:* i. e. they retain it as their inheritance or portion; that in which they delight.

19. — *bow before the good:* i. e. however prosperous and insolent for a time, they are often reduced to the necessity of seeking the favor of the good in a humble manner. — *at the gates:* i. e. as suppliants.

23. — *labor*, &c. Working without talking will make men rich; but talking without working will make men poor.

24. — *is folly:* i. e. their high honor or station is only a source of folly, or the means of making it more conspicuous.

25. — *lives:* i. e. which are endangered by false accusation. — *lies:* although they thereby endanger the lives of the innocent.

26. *confidence:* ground of confidence, security, parallel with *refuge*. — *his children:* i. e. the children of him who fears God; the antecedent to *his* being implied in the expression, *The fear of Jehovah*. Comp. ch. xix. 23.

28. — *numerous people*, &c.: the true glory of a king consists not in his personal splendor, his palaces, treasures, pomp, &c., but in a numerous people; which he cannot have without good government.

30. *A quiet heart*, &c. "There is nothing conduces more to health and happiness than a quiet, gentle, and contented mind; but envy, and such like fretful passions, is as miserable a torment and consuming disease as rottenness in the bones."

31. — *reproaches his Maker:* because he is alike the Creator of the rich and the poor. Comp. Job xxxi. 15, Prov. xxii. 2.

32. *is thrust down:* i. e. is ruined, perishes. Or the phrase may figuratively denote the state of the sinner's mind, when he falls into trouble; that he is utterly cast down, or reduced to despair; while the righteous, in the deepest trouble, even in death, has hope in God.

33. *Wisdom rests*, &c. "He that is truly wise hides his treasure, so as not to boast of it, though he does not hide his talent, so as not to trade with it. — If fools have a little smattering of knowledge, they take all occasions, though very foreign, to bring it in by head and shoulders." Henry.

34. — *is sin:* i. e. caused by sin.

35. *causes shame:* i. e. who by ill management brings reproach upon his prince.

Ch. XV. 2. — *knowledge pleasing:* by taking due care, when, and what, and to whom, and how, he speaks. — *pours forth:* i. e. inconsiderately and at random utters thoughts which amount only to folly.

4. — *tree of life.* See the note on ch. iii. 18. — *wound in the spirit:* i. e. breaks the heart, as we say.

6. — *much wealth.* "A truly just and merciful man is very rich, whether he has little or much, because he is well contented, and what he has is likely to continue in his family; but there is much disquiet and trouble in the greatest revenues of the wicked, which can neither stay long with him, nor give him satisfaction while he enjoys them."

7. — *what is not sound:* i. e. spreads abroad or scatters what is vain, futile, or foolish. The expression לֹא כֵן seems to have this meaning in 2 Kings xvii. 9, Is. xvi. 6, Jer. xxiii. 10.

8. *The sacrifice of the wicked.* "Even wicked men bring God sacrifices, to stop the mouth of conscience, and to keep up their reputation in the world, as malefactors come to a sanctuary, not because it is a holy place, but because it shelters them from justice; but their sacrifices are not offered in sincerity, nor from a good principle; they dissemble with God, and in their conversations give the lie to their devotions, and for that reason they are an abomination to him, because they are made a cloak for sin." But "God has such a love for upright, good people, that, though they are not at the expense of a sacrifice, their prayer is a delight to

him." The verse is a caution against resting in mere ceremonial worship without moral virtue. Comp. Ps. l.

10. — *forsakes the way:* i. e. the way of rectitude; the way prescribed by God.

12. — *to the wise:* lest he should receive rebuke.

13. — *spirit is broken:* which will be manifested in a wobegone countenance, as is implied by the parallel line.

14. — *feeds upon folly:* vain and foolish things are meat and drink to them.

15. — *afflicted:* i. e. in spirit. A melancholy spirit renders the brightest day dark. The mind gives to outward objects their color and complexion.

19. — *the slothful*, &c. "A slothful man, when he has any thing to do, feigns to himself most grievous difficulties, which he fancies or pretends are impossible to be overcome; but those very things seem easy to the industry of honest-hearted men, who go on smoothly in their business, and conquer all impediments." Patrick.

20. — *despises his mother:* and thus makes her sad, as is implied by its connection with the preceding line.

21. *Folly is joy*, &c.: i. e. It is his delight to do foolish and wicked actions. — *walks uprightly:* and finds his joy in it, as is implied by the parallelism.

23. — *by the answer of his mouth:* i. e. by giving good advice, when asked.

24. — *leads upward*, &c. The wise pursue a path insuring to themselves a continuance of life and happiness, which, being directly opposed to the path leading down to the grave, is said "to lead upwards."

25. — *the proud.* Those who imagine themselves independent of Providence are contrasted with those who have no other support but Providence.

26. — *pleasant words:* which aim at the benefit, not the injury, of others. — *are pure:* and therefore acceptable to Jehovah.

27. "He that is so greedy of money that he cares not how he gets it, instead of raising his family, confounds it; but he that hates bribes and all unlawful ways of gain shall prosper and continue it." Patrick.

28. — *pours out:* abundantly, hastily, and without consideration of consequences.

29. — *far from the wicked:* i. e. so as not to listen to their cry, nor to afford them aid, when they call upon him.

31. — *reproof of life:* i. e. reproof which leads to a happy life, salutary reproof.

33. — *guides to wisdom.* Comp. ch. i. 7, ix. 10.

Ch. XVI. 1. — *preparation of the heart*, &c.: i. e. when man has thought what to utter and in what order, still, after all, it depends upon God what language shall come from his tongue. Man proposes, God disposes. Or, *the answer of the tongue* may denote the answer of God to the voice of prayer.

3. *Commit thy doings*, &c.: Consider the event of every thing which you undertake as depending upon God's providence.

4. — *for its end:* i. e. object, or purpose. Otherwise, for *his* purpose; the pronominal suffix being applicable to *Jehovah*, or to *every thing*. According to the rendering in the text, the meaning will be substantially the same as that assigned to the verse by Grotius: — "God has ordained every thing to that which answers or is suited to it, and the wicked he has ordained for the day of evil, i. e. of punishment. There is not only a wise arrangement and correspondence in good things, but also in evil things, for the evil of punishment follows the evil of guilt; the evil day is appointed for the evil-doer." Some understand the last line as denoting that wicked men are appointed to punish others, as in Is. x. 5, 6. The idea which some have drawn from the passage, that God makes men wicked on purpose to punish them, is too metaphysical for the writer, and too gross for any writer. God made man upright; he makes himself wicked, and is justly appointed to punishment for his wickedness.

5. *From generation to generation.* See Ges. ad verb. יָד.

6. — *kindness and truth:* i. e. exercised by men, comp. ch. iii. 3, xx. 28, and here used in opposition to sacrifices and ceremonies, by which the corrupt Jews supposed they might secure the favor of God.

9. — *devises his way:* i. e. if a man lay his plans with never so much care, he cannot insure success to them. This is at the disposal of God. Comp. ver. 1, and Jer. x. 23.

10. *A divine sentence.* The writer's aim seems to be to procure a religious respect for the sentence of the king, as being the minister of God, and as placed above ordinary motives to give a wrong judgment.

11. — *his work:* made by his direction and appointment, so

that no man can corrupt or alter them without violating his authority and incurring his displeasure. See the note on ch. xx. 10.

12. — *to kings :* i. e. to those worthy of the name.

14. — *messengers of death.* The expression may be derived from the custom of Oriental despotism. "When the enemies of a great man in Turkey have gained influence enough over the prince to procure a warrant for his death, a capidgy or executioner is sent to him, and shows him the order he has to carry back his head; the other kisses it and freely gives it up." Thevenot. Comp. 1 Kings ii. 25, Matt. xiv. 10.

15. — *light of the king's countenance :* i. e. his smiling, favorable countenance refreshes and invigorates. — *latter rain :* which falls in the spring, not long before the time of harvest, in Palestine, and refreshes the parched fields and brings to maturity the harvest.

17. *It is the highway*, &c. : i. e. In departing from evil they find a smooth and pleasant path.

20. — *to the word :* the commands of God. Comp. ch. xiii. 13, Ps. cxix. 105. This rendering is made probable by the parallelism.

21. "He whose mind is well furnished with wisdom cannot but win a great reputation, and be highly esteemed for his prudent counsels and resolutions; but if he have the powerful charms of eloquence also, to convey his mind delightfully unto others, it will add a greater value to his wisdom, and make it more diffusive and instructive unto the world." Patrick.

22. — *their folly :* which brings its punishment with it, or close behind it.

23. *The heart :* considered as the seat of the understanding, as it was regarded by the Hebrews.

24. *Pleasant words*, &c. Agreeable discourse is both delightful and salutary.

26. — *his mouth :* i. e. the craving of his appetite. Comp. Eccles. vi. 7.

27. — *devises mischief :* literally, *digs mischief :* a metaphor derived from the practice of digging pits to entrap wild animals. — *a burning fire :* which consumes the reputation of his neighbour. Comp. James iii. 6.

30. — *shuts his eyes*, &c. : i. e. by the motions of the eyes and of the lips he gives signs to his associates to assist him in accomplishing mischief.

32. — *the mighty :* warrior, or hero.

33. *The lot*, &c. "Acknowledge the divine providence in all

things, even in those which seem most casual; for though men cast the lots into the lap of a garment, or into a hollow vessel, and thence draw them out again, yet it is the Lord who directs entirely in what order they shall come forth, and so determines the matter in doubt according to his pleasure." Patrick.

Ch. XVII. 2. — *rules over*, &c.: i. e. is sometimes appointed by the father as the guardian of unworthy children, or placed at the head of the concerns of the household.

4. — *listens*, &c.: i. e. pays regard to bad counsel.

5. — *the poor*. See the note on ch. xiv. 31.

7. — *becomes not*: i. e. is not in consistency with his general character. — *the noble*: i. e. in manners, disposition, character. So in ver. 26.

8. — *precious stone*, &c.: i. e. "A gift is so tempting, that it can no more be refused than a lovely jewel by him to whom it is presented; and such is its power, it commonly prevails over all men, despatches all business, carries all causes, and, in a word, effects whatsoever a man desires." Patrick.

9. — *seeks love*: i. e. promotes love among friends.

11. — *cruel messenger*. See the note on xvi. 14.

12. — *a fool in his folly*: an unreasonable, bad man, when his ungovernable passions and appetites are most excited.

14. *The beginning*, &c. "One hot word, one peevish reflection, one angry demand, one spiteful contradiction, begets another, and that a third, and so on, till it proves likes the cutting of a dam; when the water has got a little passage, it does itself widen the breach, bears down all before it, and there is then no stopping it, no reducing it." Henry.

16. — *It is sense*, &c. The idea is, that wealth cannot obtain wisdom, when natural ability is wanting.

17. — *born a brother*: a true friend will in adversity be felt to be as valuable and dear as a brother.

18. — *strikes hands*. See the note on ch. vi. 1.

19. — *offence*: i. e. who is disposed to give offence to others. By understanding פֶּשַׁע in an unusual and rather doubtful sense, we may render, *He loves trouble who loves quarrels*. In this way the sense will be more accordant with the parallel line. — *raises high his gate*: i. e. *the gate of his house*: i. e. is proud and ostentatious, carries his head too high, as we say. — *seeks ruin*: because

he thus makes himself odious to God and man; or because he involves himself in ruinous expenses.

21. *The fool*, &c.: i. e. A son who becomes impious and wicked.

23. — *out of the bosom:* i. e. in secret, comp. ch. xxi. 14; being secretly conveyed from the bosom of the giver to his own.

24. *Wisdom*, &c. See ch. xiv. 6. — *ends of the earth:* i. e. wander far and wide without discovering wisdom.

26. — *to fine the righteous:* as was and is practised in the regions of Oriental despotism.

27. — *a cool spirit:* i. e. not easily excited, not forward and hasty to utter whatever comes into one's head.

Ch. XVIII. 1. — *separates himself from others:* i. e. affects singularity, despises the ways and opinions of others, or lives a life of seclusion. — *seeks his own desire:* i. e. indulges his own wayward fancy, is wedded to his own opinions, obstinately attached to his own way. — *offended*, &c.: nothing is too wise and good for him to oppose; whatever any one may urge against his opinions and plans, with never so much reason, he opposes it, and obstinately maintains his own prejudices.

2. — *in understanding:* i. e. in acquiring sound knowledge. — *revealing*, &c.: i. e. in giving utterance to all his thoughts, and thus exposing his folly.

3. — *comes also contempt:* i. e. contempt is the companion of the wicked man; he is treated with contempt. Comp. ch. xi. 2. Some understand the verse as pointing out the danger of bad company, and the reproach which a bad man brings upon those who admit him into their society.

4. — *man's mouth:* i. e. a wise man's, as is to be understood from the parallelism.

5. This proverb is directed against the venality of judges, which is common in the despotic countries of the East.

6. — *calls for blows:* i. e. he invites blows upon himself by his rash and provoking speeches.

8. — *like dainties.* This proverb seems to point out the danger of slanderous stories, inasmuch as they are swallowed with avidity and remembered by those to whom they are related.

9. Idleness is as bad as wastefulness.

13. — *has heard*, &c. Comp. Sirach xi. 8.

14. — *his disease:* a manly spirit will sustain one under bodily

weakness; but when the mind itself has lost its courage, and is cast down and oppressed with grief, how hopeless is the case!

17. — *searches him through:* examines into the truth of his allegations. One tale is good till another is told.

18. — *parts asunder the mighty:* i. e. mighty combatants, or litigants, so that they shall no more contend, but go each to his own business.

19. — *bars of a castle:* i. e. it is easier to break the bars of a castle than to remove the obstructions which lie in the way of a hearty reconciliation.

20. "The tongue is so hard to govern, and so much depends upon it, that we ought to take as great care about the words we speak, as we do about the fruit of our trees, or the increase of the earth, which we are to eat; for according as they are wholesome and good, or unsavory and bad, so will the pleasure or the pain be, wherewith we shall be filled." Patrick.

21. — *love it:* i. e. love to talk much.

22. — *a wife:* i. e. a wife indeed, a good wife. — *from Jehovah.* It is probably implied, that, in consequence of the difficulty of discerning the true character, human skill and care are of less avail in the acquisition of a good wife than of other blessings. Comp. xix. 14.

24. — *of many associates*, &c. He will be ruined in consequence of neglect of business, and of his expensive mode of living. Comp. xxi. 17.

Ch. XIX. 1. — *of false lips:* i. e. who has acquired wealth by falsehood and fraud.

3. — *against Jehovah:* as the cause of the evils which he has brought upon himself by his own folly.

4. — *is separated.* This is the literal rendering. The poor man finds himself solitary and alone, because he is forsaken by his neighbour.

7. — *follows after their words:* he calls to mind the former professions and promises of his friends, and reminds them of them; but finds that words are wind, that leaves no trace behind.

8. — *loves himself:* i. e. is a truer lover of himself, or promotes his true interest more, than he who is bent upon mere outward good.

10. *Luxury*, &c. Comp. ch. xxvi. 8, xxx. 22. This verse seems to denote that a noble mind is required in a noble condition. A

foolish, knavish, ill-behaving person becomes more ridiculous, the more splendid the style of living which he adopts. — *a servant*, &c., as sometimes happens under the despotisms of the East.

12. — *roaring of a lion:* i. e. inspiring terror. — *dew upon the grass:* i. e. refreshing and invigorating.

13. — *a continual dropping:* i. e. from the eaves of a house. Her contentions are continually renewing themselves; there is no cessation. Comp. ch. xxvii. 15.

14. See the note on ch. xviii. 22.

15. — *deep sleep:* makes a man neglect his affairs, as if he were asleep, so that he comes to want.

18. — *his death:* i. e. his ruin, by deferring his punishment till it is too late. Comp. xxiii. 13, 14.

19. — *again:* when you have helped him out of one danger, it will not be long before his violent temper will involve him in new trouble.

21. — *devices:* Understand from the parallel line "which are often disappointed."

22. — *a man of deceit:* i. e. one who promises favors which he does not mean to bestow.

24. — *the dish:* i. e. he is too lazy to eat. Allusion is made to the manner in which the Orientals help themselves to their food. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 23.

25. *Strike a scoffer*, &c. Severe punishment may do no good to a derider of religion, but it tends to warn and reclaim the incautious persons whom he has injured. Reproof will be sufficient to correct those who are well disposed.

26. — *his father*, &c.: reduces them to extreme poverty by his prodigality, and, as it were, turns his mother out of doors.

27. — *instruction.* Beware of those who, professing to instruct or reprove you, would draw you away from the plain, established principles of virtue.

28. — *swallows down*, &c.: i. e. it is agreeable and pleasant to them. Comp. Job xv. 16.

Ch. XX. 1. — *reels:* literally, *wanders:* i. e. from the path.

2. — *terror of a king:* i. e. the terror inspired by the wrath of a king.

5. — *like deep water:* i. e. hard to come at.

6. — *faithful man:* i. e. in connection with the parallel line,

one who comes up to his professions of kindness; who will be true to a friend in his distress. Comp. ch. xix. 22.

11. — *will be pure*, &c.: i. e. when he becomes a man. "The man and child an individual make."

12. — *Jehovah made them:* and of course can himself see the actions of men. Comp. ch. xv. 3, Ps. xciv. 9.

13. *Open thine eyes:* i. e. Awake early.

15. — *gold*, &c.: i. e. the ability to discourse with true wisdom is more valuable than the largest treasure of gold or jewels.

16. — *garment*, &c.: i. e. trust no one who is so inconsiderate and rash as to make himself responsible for a stranger, but obtain from him immediate security.

17. — *of falsehood:* i. e. obtained by dishonest means. Figuratively, all things obtained by injustice may be here denoted, which, though they may please a man in the beginning, will bring pain and sorrow in the end.

20. — *His lamp*, &c. See the note on Job xviii. 6, xxix. 3.

24. — *his way:* to what the way which he takes will lead. A man's enterprises succeed not as he desires and designs, but as God disposes and directs. Comp. ch. xvi. 9, Jer. x. 23.

25. — *what is holy:* i. e. a vow.

26. — *the wheel*, &c. See Amos i. 3, and the note.

27. — *lamp of Jehovah:* i. e. lighted up by him.

30. — *a cleansing from evil:* i. e. effectual means to reclaim a vicious man.

Ch. XXI. 1. *As streams of water:* which husbandmen or gardeners conduct over their fields or gardens. — *heart of the king:* not only the hearts of other men, but even the hearts of kings, who are more absolute and uncontrollable than other men. The application of this proverb seems to be uncertain. It may be designed to show that the power of kings to do evil is limited; that the people cannot be oppressed by them more than God sees fit; or to show that a religious reverence is due to the determinations of kings. Harmer and some others suppose the verse to relate particularly to the bounty of a king. "Which way soever the heart of a king turneth, it conveys riches, just as a watering canal doth plenty; and let it be remembered that the Lord turns it whithersoever he will, and makes whom he pleases the favorite of princes."

4. — *splendor:* literally, *lamp*. It appears to be a metaphor,

denoting the splendor and prosperity in which the wicked man glories. See the note on Job xxix. 3. — *ruin:* in this sense the Hebrew term is evidently used in ch. x. 16.

5. — *the active*, &c. "He that to prudent counsels and contrivances adds an honest diligence is likely to grow rich; but he that acts inconsiderately in his business, or greedily catches at every advantage, whether by right or wrong, or undertakes more than he can manage, out of an eager desire to grow rich presently, is most likely to be a beggar." Patrick.

6. — *scattered breath:* which is breathed forth from the lips, and immediately disappears. Comp. ch. xiii. 11. — *seek death:* i. e. seek that which will prove their destruction. See ch. viii. 36.

7. — *snatch them away:* i. e. shall prove their own ruin. Comp. Ps. vii. 16.

8. — *guilty man.* See Gesenius on וָזָר. — *is crooked:* i. e. he uses immoral means for the attainment of his end.

9. — *a large house:* literally, *a house of fellowship:* i. e. large enough to contain more families than one. Or the meaning may be, *a common house*, i. e. one occupied by more than one family.

10. The design of this proverb seems to be to give a caution against having any close connection with a wicked man, since he will spare neither friend nor foe who stands in the way of his designs.

11. See the note on ch. xix. 25.

12. *He causes*, &c. By the pronoun *He* we may understand *God.* Comp. ch. xxii. 12. But the connection seems to require us to refer it to *the righteous man* in the parallel line, being regarded as a judge or magistrate.

16. — *the dead:* more literally, *shades*, or *ghosts.* "By the term רְפָאִים, which denotes *languid*, *feeble*, the ancient Hebrews refer to the *shades*, *manes*, or *ghosts*, of the dead, whom they supposed to be destitute of blood and animal life, and therefore weak and languid like a sick person, Is. xiv. 10; but yet not wholly without some faculties of mind, as, for example, memory. Is. xiv. 9, Ps. lxxxviii. 11, Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, Is. xxvi. 14, 19." Ges.

18. — *ransom.* Comp. ch. xi. 8, Is. xliii. 3, 4.

20. — *swallows them up:* i. e. wastes by extravagance and dissipation what he ought to reserve for a future day.

22. Comp. Eccles. vii. 19, ix. 18.

24. — *scoffer is his name:* i. e. he is deserving of the severest condemnation, and exposes himself to punishment from God.

25. — *the death of him:* i. e. his indolent wishes, which lead to no exertion, prey upon his health.

27. — *an abomination.* See the note on ch. xv. 8. — *with an evil design:* i. e. when he is meditating some particular evil design, and wishes to hide it.

28. — *that hears:* i. e. that testifies to nothing which he has not heard or seen. — *shall always speak:* i. e. when liars are cut off, he lives, and will be allowed to deliver his testimony as long as he lives.

29. — *hardens his face:* "Here is, 1. The presumption and impudence of a wicked man. *He hardens his face*, brazens it, that he may not blush, steels it, that he may not tremble when he commits the greatest crimes; he will have his way, and nothing shall hinder him. Is. lvii. 17. 2. The caution and circumspection of a good man; he does not ask, 'What *would* I do? What have I a mind to? and that I will have'; but, 'What should I do? What does God require of me? What is duty? What is prudence? What is for edification?' And so he does not force his way, but directs it by a safe and certain rule." Henry.

Ch. XXII. 1. — *good-will:* an interest in the affections and esteem of all about us. Comp. Luke ii. 52, Phil. iv. 8.

2. — *meet together:* i. e. the world does not consist of all rich, or all poor, but they are mingled together as the members of the same civil community. — *the Maker of them all:* and therefore they are under obligation to exercise respect and good-will toward each other. Comp. ch. xiv. 31, Job xxxi. 15, Mal. ii. 10.

5. — *far from them:* i. e. from the society of the deceitful.

7. *The rich*, &c. The point of this proverb, probably, is the unexpressed consequence which is to be drawn from it, namely, that a man should by industry and frugality acquire property, and thus possess the glorious privilege of being independent.

8. — *is prepared:* i. e. made ready for him. For this meaning of the Hebrew term, comp. 1 Sam. xx. 7, 9, xxv. 17.

11. — *loves purity*, &c. He that has a sincere and upright heart will utter not flattery, but his honest convictions, so that his discourse will be agreeable, and gain the favor of a good king.

12. — *watch over knowledge:* i. e. men of knowledge, in opposition to false pretenders. The providence of God watches over such men, and prospers the advice they give; whilst the words or vain and deceitful counsels of the dishonest will come to nothing.

14. *The mouth:* by which they allure and persuade the thoughtless to sin and ruin.

16. — *gives to the rich:* either as a bribe or in expectation of receiving some return.

17. The passage from verse 17 to 21, instead of consisting of proverbs, is an exhortation to the study of wisdom, and is to be regarded either as an epilogue to the division from ch. x. to this place, or as an introduction to the collection from ver. 22 to ch. xxiv. 22. The proverbs from ch. xxii. 22 to ch. xxiv. 22 differ from the preceding in being more in the way of exhortation or admonition, and less sententious; most of them requiring more than one verse, and some of them, three, four, or more, for the expression of the sentiment.

18. — *established upon thy lips:* i. e. if they be, as it were, at your tongue's end, ready to be applied to the various exigencies of life.

21. — *that send thee:* i. e. show yourself capable and trustworthy to them that employ thee in any business of which they expect an account of thee.

22. — *because he is poor:* i. e. do not take advantage of his poverty and his inability to resist thee. — *at the gate:* i. e. in a court of law. See the note on Job v. 4.

25. — *take to thyself*, &c.: i. e. acquire such a disposition and character as shall involve you in difficulties. — *a snare:* i. e. that which will prove a snare.

26. See the note on ch. vi. 1.

27. — *thy bed*, &c.: i. e. why should you expose yourself to such a state of things, that, if you are unable to pay your bonds, the creditor may take from you every thing, so that you shall not even have a bed upon which to lay your head?

28. — *landmark.* Comp. Deut. xix. 14.

29. — *obscure.* This is the metaphorical term of the original to denote persons in humble station.

Ch. XXIII. 2. — *put a knife to thy throat*, &c.: i. e. restrain thyself from greediness and excess, as it were by the application of a knife in a threatening manner to thy throat. This precept seems designed not only to guard against intemperance, but against improper behaviour, in the presence of a ruler, to which excess might lead.

3. — *deceitful meat:* i. e. the friendship of rulers and great

men, however agreeable and flattering, is very uncertain and unstable, nay, even deceitful; since experience proves that they who are familiar with princes are in a situation of great danger.

4. — *thy wisdom:* i. e. that sort of wisdom which consists in laboring to be rich, and supposing that riches are all that is wanting to happiness.

5. — *that which is not:* i. e. which has no permanent existence.

6. — *that has an evil eye:* i. e. an avaricious, sordid disposition.

7. — *as he thinks in his heart*, &c.: i. e. his true character is displayed in what is passing in his mind, rather than in what he utters with his lips. — *is not with thee:* i. e. his invitation is not cordial. It was given from ostentation, or for ambitious and selfish purposes.

8. — *vomit up:* i. e. when you have discovered his illiberality and selfishness, or perhaps ill treatment, you will feel such disgust as to wish that what you have swallowed could be thrown back upon his table. — *pleasant words:* i. e. whatever compliments, courtesies, or agreeable discourse you may have bestowed upon your entertainer.

9. *Speak not*, &c.: i. e. for the purpose of admonition or direction.

10. — *enter not:* i. e. either to reap their crops, or perhaps, rather, to possess their lands.

11. — *their avenger:* i. e. though they may have no human guardians or friends to oppose thee, they have in heaven a vindicator, or avenger, who is able and willing to defend their rights, or punish their infringement. On the term *avenger* or *vindicator*, see the note on Job xix. 25.

13. — *he will not die:* i. e. he will escape the ruin which is the consequence of wickedness.

17. — *envy*, &c.: i. e. let not the view of their present prosperity excite thee to envy them, and to approve and imitate their evil courses.

18. — *a reward:* i. e. for them that persevere in the ways of religion and virtue.

20. — *prodigal of their flesh:* i. e. waste away their bodies by sensual indulgence.

23. *Buy truth:* Spare no pains nor cost to obtain the knowledge of what is true and right, and hold it fast.

27. — *deep pit;* — *narrow well:* from which one can with difficulty escape, when he has fallen into it.

28. — *lies in wait.* See ch. vii. 12. — *gathers:* i. e. to the number of those whom she has already made her prey.

29. — *without cause:* i. e. not in the just and necessary defence of himself or his country.

30. — *mixed wine:* i. e. spiced, strong wine.

34. — *midst of the sea:* i. e. in a ship in the midst of the sea. — *top of a mast.* As the comparison holds good in several particulars, there is some doubt as to that which was intended by the poet; whether he refers to the stupidity and senselessness of danger which are the consequence of intoxication, or to the giddy feelings of the persons intoxicated, when their heads swim, and they feel as if they were tossed about by the rolling waves of the sea.

35. Here the drunkard is represented as using the language which corresponds to his senselessness and stupidity. "I cannot deny that I exposed myself by my drunkenness to various abuses and injuries. But I was not sensible of them at the time, nor do I now feel much harm from them." — *When shall I awake?* i. e. O, that I could rouse myself from my state of languor and stupidity! I would again seek wine.

Ch. XXIV. 1. — *envious of wicked men:* let it not disturb thy tranquillity to see men thrive who are bent upon wickedness. — *to be with them:* i. e. as a companion and a partaker of their profitable crimes. Comp. ch. xxiii. 17.

5. — *is strong.* Comp. Eccles. ix. 14 – 16.

6. Comp. ch. xx. 18.

7. — *too high:* i. e. so that he cannot attain it, and is ashamed to speak *at the gate*, i. e. in the place of judgment, or in public.

8. — *devises to do evil,* &c.: i. e. a contriver of unjust, malicious plans shall be hated, comp. ch. xiv. 17, and branded with an odious name.

9. — *is sin,* &c. The meaning of this verse seems to be, that the purpose of evil, before it breaks forth into action, is sinful in the sight of God; but that the bold and obstinate offender is not only offensive to God, but odious to men.

10. — *faint,* &c.: i. e. when courage or hope is lost, all is lost.

11. — *Spare thyself not:* i. e. Spare no pains to discover the

innocence of one who is about to be led to execution. This may be addressed to judges in particular.

12. — *we knew it not:* It is no excuse to say, that you are ignorant of the guilt or innocence of the accused, or that you knew not but that he was justly condemned, unless you have taken all possible pains to discover the truth in relation to the case.

13. *Eat honey:* This is said merely to illustrate the following verse by an implied comparison.

16. — *fall seven times:* i. e. though he repeatedly fall into calamities. — *fall into mischief:* and not rise again.

17. *Rejoice not*, &c. Comp. Job xxxi. 29.

18. — *turn away his anger*, &c.: namely, upon thee.

20. — *lamp.* See ch. xx. 20, and note.

21. — *and the king:* whom the Orientals regarded as the vicegerent of God, standing in a near and peculiar relation to him, called his son, &c. — *given to change:* fond of revolution, disobedient and rebellious subjects, disorganizers.

22. — *proceeding from both:* namely, God and the king.

23. *These also are words of the wise.* These words probably have relation to ch. xxii. 17, and intimate that the proverbs from ver. 23 to the end of this chapter are an appendix to those mentioned in ch. xxii. 17.

26. — *gives a right answer:* i. e. the judge who gives correct decisions. — *Kisses the lips:* i. e. Gains good-will, makes himself beloved.

27. — *build thy house:* "Do every thing in order; and first mind those things which are most necessary; contenting thyself with a little hut in the field, till thou hast gotten an estate by a careful improvement of thy pasturage and thy tillage; and then it will be timely enough to build thee an house, and to bring a wife into it." Patrick.

29. Comp. ch. xx. 22.

Ch. XXV. 1. — *men of Hezekiah:* i. e. literary men whom Hezekiah appointed for the purpose. The title in which these words are contained is prefixed to the collection of proverbs which extends to ch. xxx., which the learned men of Hezekiah copied from larger collections, or from books in which they were scattered.

2. — *to conceal a thing:* to hide from human eyes the reasons of his purposes and proceedings. — *search out a matter:* i. e.

when they decide and decree nothing until they have made the most careful examination, so as to be able to give the clearest reasons for their proceedings.

3. — *unsearchable:* men in general are unable to penetrate the purposes and designs of kings.

4 and 5. "You cannot have a pure silver vessel, till you have purified the silver; and no nation can have a king a public blessing, till all bad counsellors, wicked and interested ministers, and sycophants are banished from the court and cabinet."

6 and 7. Comp. Luke xiv. 10.

8. *Go not forth*, &c.: i. e. to the gates where the courts of law were usually held.

9. — *another's secret:* not even the heat of contention with an opponent will justify the revelation of his secret which may have been intrusted to you.

11. — *with figures:* i. e. ornamented with silver figures. Otherwise, *upon images of silver.* Some render, *in baskets of silver.* But this rendering is not supported by Hebrew usage, as may be seen in Ges. ad verb.

13. — *cold of snow*, &c. There can be little doubt that the use of snow in cooling drinks is referred to.

14. — *falsely boasts of giving:* i. e. makes many promises of what he will give, which he never performs.

15. — *breaks bones:* i. e. melts the heart as hard as a bone; as we say, as a stone.

16. This verse may be regarded as a separate precept, inculcating moderation, especially in things which are pleasant, or merely as an illustration of ver. 17.

18. *A battle-hammer*, &c.: i. e. equally pernicious and destructive.

20. — *vinegar upon nitre:* which causes it to effervesce, and, as it were, irritates it. *Nitre* here probably denotes a mineral alkali, the natron of the moderns, or Egyptian nitre, which, being mingled with oil, is still used for soap.

22. — *coals of fire upon his head.* This expression seems most naturally to denote that which causes the most intense pain, that which is insupportable. The meaning seems to be, that, by returning good for evil, the evil-doer will be overwhelmed with remorse and shame.

23. — *brings forth rain:* covers the face of the sky with black clouds, full of rain, so a backbiting tongue causes indignation in

him who is slandered, which may be the cause of punishment to the slanderer.

26. — *troubled fountain*, — *corrupted spring.* It is as melancholy and discouraging a circumstance to see a good man, who is the source of much good to his fellow-men, fall into ruin through the arts of the wicked, as it is to the weary, thirsty traveller to find a fountain or a spring trampled upon and polluted, so as to be unfit for use. It seems to be more agreeable to the use of the word מָט to understand it as denoting *falling into ruin*, or *calamity*, not voluntarily succumbing, and yielding to the persuasions of the wicked. Possibly, however, it may mean *to vacillate*, in a moral sense.

27. — *So the search of high things is weariness. High things* may denote difficult questions respecting Providence, or other subjects of human investigation; in which case, the meaning will be similar to that of the observation in Ecclesiastes, that much study is a weariness of the flesh. Or, *high things* may denote worldly honors; in which case, the line will relate to the cares and vexations which attend the pursuit of honor. In the original, there is, I think, a sort of play upon words, using the same word twice in the line with an altered signification. The word rendered *high things* denotes *high*, *honorable*, *glorious*, and also *heavy*. An imperfect imitation of the line in English would be, The search of *weighty* things is *weighty;* understanding *weighty*, in the first case, in the sense of *important*, and in the second, in the sense of *heavy*. The verse is rendered in the sense which I have assigned to it by Coverdale. "Like as it is not good to eat much honey, even so he that will search out high things, it shall be too heavy for him." The supply of a negative, as in the common version, appears to me to be inadmissible.

Ch. XXVI. 1. — *snow*, &c.: i. e. unseasonable and incongruous. — *fool:* i. e. one who by his folly or wickedness, or both united, makes a bad use of power.

2. — *shall not come:* shall not take effect, or fall upon him against whom it is uttered, but be dispersed into the air, as the birds mentioned fly away, no one knows whither.

4. — *according to his folly.* Some suppose the meaning of ver. 4 and 5 to be, that, according to circumstances and the nature of his folly, a fool should or should not receive any answer. It appears to me the meaning is best elicited by understanding the

phrase *according to his folly* in different senses. In the first case, *Answer not in the manner of the fool;* in the second, *Answer him in the manner which his folly demands.* "If the fool boast of himself, do not answer him by boasting of thyself. If he rail and talk passionately, do not thou rail and talk passionately too. If he tell one great lie, do not thou tell another to match it. If he calumniate thy friends, do not thou calumniate his. If he banter, do not answer him in his own language, *lest thou be like him.*" Henry. But answer in such a manner as his folly demands, as is adapted to expose it and convince him of it, and leave him nothing to say for himself, *lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

6. — *has his feet cut off:* i. e. he fails in the object of the mission, as surely as if he should cut off the feet of the person sent.

7. — *hang loose:* like a dead weight, useless, and serve no purpose. The rendering which I have adopted seems best supported. See Gesen. ad verb.

8. — *honor to a fool.* It is as ill placed in his hands, as gems upon a heap of common, worthless stones.

9. — *a thorn,* &c. He injures himself and others by the ill use he makes of it, as one would by brandishing a thorn-bush up and down, at random.

10. *A master,* &c. The meaning of this proverb, which probably has been explained more variously than any other in the book, seems to be, that it is best to employ in any business one who is capable, and well acquainted with the work; and that he who employs the incapable and worthless is like one who should hire chance travellers, who would take no interest in the employer or his work. See Gesen. Thesaurus on חוּל. Luther renders, "Ein guter Meister macht ein Ding recht; aber wer einen Hümpler dinget, dem wirds verdorben."

12. — *of a fool:* i. e. who may become sensible of his folly and willing to receive instruction.

13. — *lion,* &c. He is frightened from real duties by fancied difficulties.

14. — *turns,* &c.: i. e. backward and forward, without leaving them; so the sluggard lies in his bed on one side till he is weary of that, and then turns to the other, but still is in his bed.

16. *The sluggard,* &c. Taking no pains to inform himself, and of course ignorant of the difficulties which attend an opinion or a determination, he takes himself to be wiser than others.

17. — *a dog by the ears:* i. e. he incurs much danger, without

necessity or the possibility of advantage. Travellers in the East speak of the wild and fierce character of the dogs in that region.

18. *As a madman:* As dangerous and as much to be shunned as a madman.

22. See ch. xviii. 8.

26. Though he may for a time conceal his malicious feelings, yet the time will come when his malice shall be publicly known, and receive the punishment which it deserves.

27. — *digs a pit:* i. e. lays a plot for the injury of another. The metaphor is drawn from the practice of hunters, who used to dig deep pits and then cover them with bushes, earth, &c., that wild beasts might fall into them. — *rolls a stone:* i. e. up a steep place, in order that it may crush another.

28. — *those whom it wounds:* i. e. because the slanderer is conscious of having incurred the enmity of the slandered.

Ch. XXVII. 3. — *a fool's wrath.* See ch. xvii. 12.

4. — *jealousy.* Comp. ch. vi. 34, 35. These proverbs apply with still greater force to Oriental countries than to our own.

5. — *love kept concealed:* i. e. which does not manifest itself in giving needful reproof, and in care for the moral welfare of a friend.

8. *As a bird*, &c. As a bird that forsakes its nest exposes itself to danger, and cannot easily settle again, so he whose levity or discontent makes him rashly leave his country, or trade, or office, wherein he was well placed, too often undoes himself, but rarely mends his condition.

10. *And go not into thy brother's house:* i. e. by fidelity in friendship, acquire such faithful friends, that it shall not be necessary to repair to a brother.

11. — *that reproaches me:* i. e. with want of care for my child, on account of his unworthy conduct.

12. Comp. ch. xxii. 3.

13. See ch. xx. 16, and the note.

14. *To him:* i. e. who blesses his neighbour, &c. His neighbour will regard this kind of blessing as no better than a curse. He will suspect the sincerity of it. There is an Italian proverb, "He who praises you more than he was wont to do has either deceived you or is about to do it."

15. Comp. ch. xix. 13, and the note.

16. — *oil*, &c.: which betrays, and, as it were, proclaims itself, by its fragrance. So blood is said "to cry out," Gen. iv. 10.

17. — *sharpens the face :* i. e. the looks, the countenance. This may be understood as expressing the idea, that by conversation and discussion one man may quicken and invigorate the mental faculties of another. But there is considerable reason for supposing that the face is here regarded as the seat of *anger ;* in which case, *to sharpen the face* will denote *to inflame the anger.* Comp. Job xvi. 9, and the note.

19. *So does the heart of man to man.* These words have been understood in various ways. They are commonly understood as denoting, that, as there is a resemblance between the face of a man and the reflected image of it in the water, so there is a resemblance between one man's heart and another's, so that in many cases we may judge of others by ourselves. Otherwise, as the water is a looking-glass, in which we may see our faces by reflection, so the heart or conscience is a mirror, in which the character of the man may be discerned. Otherwise, as every man will find reflected in the water such a countenance, whether sour or smiling, as he brings when he looks into it, so he ought to expect no other dispositions and feelings from others than those which he exercises toward them. Love wins love, &c.

20. — *the eyes of man. The eyes* here denote not merely curiosity, but the desires generally. Comp. Eccles. i. 8, iv. 8.

21. *So let a man be :* i. e. Let him take care not to be deceived by flattery, but consider who it is that gives praise, what may be the motive, and how far it is deserved.

23 – 27. " These verses recommend the advantages of private life ; and show that diligence in rural employments, and the plenty obtained by it, are more conducive to true happiness than the unstable and uneasy, though splendid, possessions of wealth and authority."

24. — *riches.* The term here seems to denote that kind of wealth which may be treasured up, such as money, garments, &c., in distinction from herds, lands, &c. — *the crown :* i. e. royal or princely dignity.

26. — *the price of thy field :* i. e. that with which you may purchase land.

Ch. XXVIII. 1. " An evil conscience makes men timorous and cowardly, like a faint-hearted soldier who runs away at the appearance of an enemy, and never so much as looks back to see whether he pursue him." Patrick.

2. — *many are its rulers.* This may denote rulers following each other in rapid succession, and by continual revolution; or rulers exercising authority at the same time, in rebellion against the legitimate king.

3. *Is a sweeping rain:* which, instead of refreshing the corn, as gentle showers do, beats it down and lays it flat, so that it can never recover, and a famine comes upon the land. "This is especially true in the East. There places are often sold by the needy government to the highest bidder, who, not knowing how soon another may bid higher for his place, makes the most of his time to remunerate himself, unscrupulous as to the means."

4. — *praise the wicked:* i. e. their conduct encourages and virtually commends the wicked.

5. — *understand not equity:* i. e. discern not, or feel not the force of, moral distinctions; their consciences are weak or dead; their corruptions blind their eyes and fill them with prejudices; and, because they do evil, they hate the light. — *all things:* i. e. relating to equity or moral conduct.

8. *Gathers it for him,* &c.: i. e. By the wise retributions of Heaven, it passes into the hands of one who will make a good use of it. Comp. ch. xiii. 22, Job xxvii. 17.

9. — *turns away his ear,* &c. He that refuses to hearken unto God and to obey his laws deceives himself, if he thinks by his prayers to please him, and make amends for his crimes; for God will be so far from hearkening to him, that he will abominate such prayers as tend to nothing but to make God a partner with him in his sins.

11. — *searches him through:* i. e. he looks through all his vain show, and easily discovers and makes it appear what he really is.

12. — *rejoice:* i. e. in the possession of authority and high station, as is suggested by the antithetical line. — *great splendor:* i. e. instead of *hiding themselves*, as in the antithetical line, men go about in splendid apparel, the sign of general prosperity. — *hide themselves:* from a feeling of gloom, and from regard to their safety, they conceal themselves, their wealth, ornaments, &c.

13. — *covers his sins.* See Ps. xxxii. 3 – 5.

14. — *fears always:* namely, to displease God, or to incur the evil consequences of sin. Comp. ch. xiv. 16.

15. — *a needy people:* who have little to satisfy his cupidity, and from their weakness are sure to be oppressed by him.

16. — *great in oppression:* and thus has a short reign, as is to be understood from the antithetical line.

17. — *borne down:* i. e. oppressed with the burden of blood-guiltiness. — *the pit:* i. e. the grave. He must be a perpetual fugitive. Otherwise, *will flee to the pit*, &c.: i. e. will fall into one danger in endeavouring to escape from another.

18. — *at once:* i. e. suddenly and unexpectedly.

20. — *faithful man:* i. e. to his promises, engagements, &c. — *makes haste to be rich:* i. e. not being a faithful man, as in the antithetical line.

21. — *for a piece of bread*, &c. Though at the first the partial judge could not be bribed without a great sum of money, yet, when he has once vitiated his conscience and accustomed himself to take bribes, he will at last sell a decision for the smallest advantage.

22. — *evil eye:* i. e. a sordid, covetous, uncharitable disposition. Comp. ch. xxii. 9, xxiii. 6.

24. — *is the companion of a robber:* i. e. deserves to be classed with robbers.

25. — *strife:* which involves him in expense and losses, as is to be inferred from the antithetical line.

26. — *is a fool:* his self-confidence and rashness lead him into misfortunes, from which *he who walks wisely* is delivered.

27. — *shuts his eyes:* i. e. turns them away from the petition and miseries of the poor. — *many a curse:* i. e. from God. Comp. ch. iii. 33, Mal. ii. 2.

28. Comp. ver. 12.

Ch. XXIX. 1. — *hardens his neck:* i. e. continues refractory or disobedient; a metaphor drawn from stubborn oxen, which refuse to submit to the yoke.

3. — *rejoices his father:* i. e. by his success in life, as is implied in the antithetical clause.

4. — *receives gifts:* i. e. as bribes.

5. — *for his feet:* i. e. of his neighbour.

6. — *there is a snare:* in which he will be caught and brought to ruin.

7. — *discerns not knowledge:* i. e. he has no true knowledge; he is not imbued with the principles of equity, and pays no regard to them in his decisions.

8. *Scoffers*, &c.: i. e. They who deride religion and positive laws. — *a flame:* excite tumults and commotions.

9. *Whether he frown or laugh*, &c.: i. e. Whether he take the serious or the jocular way of dealing with him, whether he be severe or pleasant with him, there will be no end to the controversy; the fool will answer, object, excuse, &c., and have the last word.

10. — *hates the upright:* who disapprove and oppose his evil designs.

11. — *his anger:* so the Sept., Syr., and Chald.; more literally, *his spirit*, as it is rendered in ch. xxv. 28, where a similar sentiment is expressed.

12. — *listen:* i. e. lend his ear to calumniators and flatterers. This verse is well explained by Ecclesiasticus x. 2: "As the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers; and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such are all they that dwell therein."

13. *The poor man and the oppressor*, &c. Comp. ch. xxii. 2, which contains a similar sentiment. — *enlightens*, &c.: he is the author of light and life to both.

18. — *no vision:* i. e. prophetic vision, or all that instruction which it was the office of a prophet to give to the people.

19. — *by words.* "A slave, and he that is of a servile nature, is not to be amended by reason and persuasions; no, nor by reproofs or threats; for though he hear, and understand, too, what you say, yet he will not obey till he be forced unto it by blows." Patrick.

20. Comp. ch. xxvi. 12. "Seest thou a man that is forward to speak to every matter that is started, and affects to speak first to it, to open it and speak last to it, to give judgment upon it, as if he were an oracle? There is more hope of a modest fool, who is sensible of his folly, than of such a self-conceited one." Henry.

21. — *become a son:* he will presume upon the indulgence of his master, take the liberties of a son, conduct himself as if he one day expected to be master.

23. Comp. ch. xv. 33, Matt. xxiii. 12.

24. — *hates himself:* i. e. by bringing ruin upon himself, he acts as though he hated himself. — *makes no discovery:* i. e. *he hears the curse* imprecated upon him as a witness, if he do not speak the truth; but, rather than acknowledge his own participation in the theft, he incurs the guilt of perjury. Levit. v. 1.

26. — *every man's judgment*, &c. This may denote that the sentence which the ruler gives concerning any man's cause depends upon God, who turns the hearts of rulers as the rivers of water

are turned; comp. ch. xvi. 33, xxi. 1. Or, more generally, that every man's condition and success in life depend more upon the favor of God than upon the favor of a ruler.

Ch. XXX. 1. "This chapter contains a new collection of pithy sayings, which some fancy to be Solomon's, and therefore translate the two first words thus: 'The words of the collector, or gatherer.' But why Solomon should call himself by this name, and, also, instead of the son of David, style himself the son of Jakeh, seems to me unaccountable. And therefore it is most reasonable to follow our translation, and to look upon this chapter as a fragment of some wise sentences delivered by one whose name was Agur, and his father's name Jakeh; unless we will conceive that this son of Jakeh (whoever he was) had gotten the name of *collector*, because, though he was a very wise man, yet he composed nothing himself, but only gathered out of other wise men's works such instructions as he thought most profitable, and comprised in a few words a great deal of sense." Patrick. Or, if the name *Agur* be regarded as symbolical, like Koheleth, the Preacher, it may denote *an assembler*, *one of the assembly*, i. e. of wise men. Comp. Eccles. xii. 11. *Ithiel*, a name denoting *God-with-me*, and *Ucal*, denoting *powerful*, were, no doubt, sons or disciples of Agur.

2. — *more stupid than any man*, &c. It has been supposed that the professions of ignorance, in ver. 2 and 3, are by way of reply to his disciples Ithiel and Ucal, who may have ascribed to him extraordinary knowledge, or have come to him with hard metaphysical or theological questions. But it is quite as probable that Agur speaks of his acquired knowledge and attainments with such humility, by way of contrast with the word of God, ver. 5, i. e. that truth which comes by inspiration, which God has spoken or may speak by his prophets. Comp. Amos vii. 14, 15, Jer. i. 6, Job xxxii. 7, 8.

3. — *wisdom:* i. e. philosophy; that wisdom that comes by study and by the instruction of the learned. — *knowledge of the Most Holy*. Comp. ch. ix. 10. The meaning seems to be, that he had not a knowledge of the deep things of God, his purposes, the ways of providence, &c. Comp. Job xi. 7. It may have been part of the design of this profession of ignorance to rebuke some of the author's contemporaries, who may have made great pretensions to knowledge of things human and divine.

4. The design of the questions in this verse seems to be, to illus-

trate man's ignorance of the works and the ways of God; to show that God alone is wise, and that man must depend upon him for instruction. Comp. Job xxxviii. – xli. No one was entitled to trust, or boast of, his knowledge of God acquired by his own faculties, unless he could show that he had obtained it by ascending to heaven, &c.; or unless he manifested his wisdom and power by doing such wonderful things as ascending to the skies, holding the wind, &c. Roberts quotes as Orientalisms still in use, "Yes, you are quite sure, you know all about it! Have you just returned from the heavens?" "Truly he has just finished his journey from above; listen, listen to this divine messenger!" "Our friend is about to do wonderful things; he has already caught the wind; he has seized it with his hand." See Roberts's Illustrations, ad loc. — *What is his name:* i. e. By what name is the wise man, the philosopher, called, who can do or explain these things? — *his son's name:* i. e. either, what is the name of one of his disciples, or of one of his kindred, his son. It is an emphatic way of declaring that no one ever heard of such a person. Comp. Amos vii. 14.

5. *Every word of God:* i. e. Every declaration, promise, and precept. — *pure:* i. e. free from error and imperfection.

6. *Add not*, &c. Comp. Deut. iv. 2.

8. — *falsehood and lies.* These words may refer to the errors of idolatry, and to false religious opinions, so as to have some relation to what precedes. Comp. Jer. xviii. 15. Others suppose the expressions to refer to the outside show, the deceitful promises, of mere wealth, station, pleasure, the "lying vanities of life," so as to have some relation to what follows respecting a state of mediocrity.

9. — *swear falsely:* Comp. Deut. viii. 11, &c. It has been observed that the danger of perjury was greater among the Jews than with us, as their custom or law tendered an oath to persons suspected or accused of theft, to clear or purge themselves. See Exod. xxii. 8 – 11.

10. *Lest he curse thee*, &c. The consideration of the temptations of poverty reminds the author of the condition of the poor slave, who was probably often accused upon light grounds, and thus tempted to perjure himself, or incur the vengeance of a too rigorous master. It is also intimated that the curse imprecated by the slave upon such a careless, inconsiderate informer might take effect, not being causeless.

11. In this and the following verses the author points out four

vices, which were probably the prevailing vices of his time, as especially to be detested and avoided, namely, — ingratitude, especially filial ingratitude, hypocrisy, pride, and oppression or extortion.

13. — *lofty are their eyes*, &c. Comp. ch. vi. 17, xxi. 4.

15, 16. After the mention of four detestable things, four insatiable things are enumerated, either as curious in themselves, or as illustrating the insatiable desires of man. — *horseleech:* or bloodsucker, which sucks the blood of other animals till it bursts.

> "But if he seize you, then the torture dread;
> He fastens on you till he read you dead;
> And, like a leech, voracious of his food,
> Quits not his cruel hold till gorged with blood."
> Francis's Horace, Ars Poet. 475.

Gesenius supposes that by the *bloodsucker* an imaginary female spectre is here denoted, which sucks human blood and is insatiable, like *El Ghûle* of Arabian superstition in the Thousand and One Nights, and the vampyre. — *two daughters.* "At the first he seems to have thought but of two things, namely, the grave and the barren womb, which might be called the daughters of the horseleech, because they are so perfectly of the like nature in regard of their unsatiableness. But he presently adds another, nay, a fourth came into his mind, as no less greedy; namely, the thirsty earth, which in those hot countries sucks up all the rain as fast as it falls, though never so much, and the fire, which devours all the fuel that is laid upon it. And this he expresses after the manner of the Hebrews, who, intending to mention four things or more, separate them at first, and begin with a lesser number, and proceed then to all that they designed. Comp. Amos i. 3, 6, 9, &c., Prov. vi. 16, xxx. 18, 21." Patrick.

17. — *shall pick it out*, &c.: i. e. they shall come to an infamous and miserable end, their dead bodies being unburied and left to be a prey to the ravens which frequent the brooks that run in the valleys, and to the young eagles, which shall pick out those eyes in which their scorn and derision of their parents were wont to appear. Roberts observes that the eye is the first and favorite part attacked by birds of prey, as is seen in the numerous bodies which various Eastern superstitions cause to be exposed to birds and beasts. "The crows shall one day pick out thy eyes," is no uncommon imprecation in the East.

19. — *track of an eagle*, &c. "As when a bird hath flown through the air there is no token of her way to be found, but the light air, being beaten with the stroke of her wings and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through, and therein afterward no sign where she went is to be found." Wisdom v. 11. — *upon a rock:* which receives no mark from the passing of a serpent over it. — *a ship*, &c.: that passes over the water, and leaves no trace of the keel in the waves. See Wisdom v. 10. — *track of a man*, &c. The first three things are designed as comparisons to illustrate or satirize the last; namely, criminal intercourse with a maiden, with which no one is acquainted but the lovers; while she is reputed a virgin, and conceals her wickedness with so much art, and assumes such an appearance of chastity and modesty, that it is as impossible to discover that a man has had an improper connection with her, as to discover tracks left by an eagle in the air, &c.

20. *Such:* i. e. to be discovered with equal difficulty. — *She eats*, &c.: i. e. She conceals her criminal intercourse by a ready falsehood, as one would do, who, desiring to conceal that he has eaten any thing, should wipe his lips and deny it.

22. — *a servant when he becomes a king*, as sometimes happens under the despotic governments of the East, is of all others most insolent, imperious, and cruel. There is a German proverb, "No razor shaves closer than when a boor becomes master." — *filled with bread.* This may refer to a conceited fool, whose manners in his prosperity none can bear; or to a bad man, in whose hands wealth is the instrument of oppression and mischief.

23. — *when she becomes a wife.* An ill-natured woman, when she gets a husband, being elated with her new dignity, displays all those ill humors which for her own ends she formerly concealed. She is then puffed up and imperious, and becomes intolerable to her own family, and to her relations and neighbours. — *heir to her mistress:* i. e. succeeds to the place of her mistress by the marriage of her master. This great and sudden change makes her intolerably proud, scornful, and insolent.

24–28. The four following animals may be mentioned merely as curious in natural history, as the three in ver. 29–31. Or, if they are designed to teach a moral lesson, it may be "that we should not admire bodily bulk, or beauty, or strength, or value persons for that, but judge of men by their wisdom and conduct, their industry and application to business, which are characters that deserve respect. 2. To admire the wisdom and power of the Creator in the smallest and most despicable animals, in an ant as much as in an elephant. 3. To blame ourselves, who do not act so much for our own interest as the meanest creatures do for theirs." Henry. Umbreit supposes the verses to contain a satirical reflection upon the speculating philosophers of the time. Instead of *Yet are they wise, instructed in wisdom*, he renders, *Yet are they wiser than the wise*, i. e. the learned men.

25. — *their food.* See ch. vi. 8, and the note. Comp. Virg. Æn. iv. 402.

26. *The jerboas:* "An animal about the size of the rabbit, with a head resembling that of the hog, and the hind legs quite long and adapted for leaping; it lives in caves and burrows dug in the sand, and is celebrated for its cunning. The name, i. e. the Hebrew name, might come from the burrows in which it hides itself, or from its cunning." Gesen. The Sept. renders it correctly, χοιρογρύλλιος. It is the *mus* or *dipus jaculus*, of Linnæus. See also Robinson's Calmet, at the word *Coney*.

27. — *go forth in bands:* i. e. as a well ordered host to war. See Joel ii. 4 – 8.

28. — *lizard.* This small animal is mentioned as frequenting houses by several writers quoted by Rosenmüller. "Quid, cum me domi sedentem stellio muscas captans, vel aranea retibus suis implicans, sæpe intentum facit?" Augustin., Confess., L. x., C. 35. "Sub noctem conspicitur exigua quædam lacerta secundum muros reptans et muscas captans." Bellonius, Observ., L. ii., C. 15. — *seizes:* its prey, such as flies, spiders, &c. — *in king's palaces:* in pursuit of its prey it is permitted to go into the palaces of kings; or it has such ingenuity that it enters them with impunity.

31. *The loin-girded war-horse:* literally, *the loin-girded:* an epithet which most probably denotes the horse, as equipped for war, with girths and buckles around the loins, a species of ornament frequently seen in the bass-reliefs of Persepolis, as Gesenius observes. By others the epithet is supposed to refer to the greyhound, or the zebra, or the cock. — *in the midst of his people:* i. e. surrounded by them, and surveying them with pride and confidence, and walking before them with an air of majesty.

32. — *lifting thyself up:* i. e. either in pride, or passion, or preparation to do an injury. — *hand on thy mouth:* i. e. be silent; do not say a word, much less do any thing toward the accomplishment of it.

33. — *the pressing of anger.* This verse I have rendered literally. The design of it evidently is to inculcate forbearance, composure, quietness, in opposition to the hasty expression of anger, and the utterance of provoking language. Instead of giving way to anger, the effort should be to repress it. Comp. ch. xvii. 14. Or, instead of provoking the anger of another by reproaches, we should endeavour to repress it by mildness.

Ch. XXXI. 1. *Lemuel.* This may have been the name of some Arabian or Edomitish king. There is no evidence that it was one of the names of Solomon; nor has any good reason been assigned why his appropriate name should not have been given him, if he was intended. The name denotes either *God-with-them*, or *of*, or *from*, *God.*

2. — *son of my womb:* very dear to me, as my own son, not merely mine by adoption. — *son of my vows:* for whom I made so many prayers and vows, if I might but see thee come safe into the world, and grow up to be a man, and sit upon a throne.

3. — *thy strength.* The original term denotes not only strength of body and mind, but resources, treasures, &c. — *thy ways:* i. e. thy course of life. — *that which destroys kings:* i. e. an improper and excessive intercourse with women, which has frequently led to the overthrow of the most powerful monarchs, especially in the countries of the East.

4. — *to drink wine:* i. e. to drink it to excess. It is of more importance for kings to be sparing in the use of wine, than for the miserable. Because by its influence the former forget justice to others, whilst the latter forget their own misery.

6. *Give strong drink*, &c. If the liberal use of wine and strong drink is to be allowed to any, it is to the poor and miserable rather than to rulers. — *ready to perish* is to be understood, not in a strict sense, but as denoting an unfortunate, poor, miserable man; see ver. 7; though the Jews say that on this verse was founded the practice of giving a stupefying drink to condemned prisoners when they were going to execution, as they did to the Saviour.

8. — *for the dumb:* i. e. for those who, through incapacity, like orphans, or through fear of powerful opponents, are unable to defend their cause.

10 – 31. It seems probable that this description of a good wife is not a continuation of the discourse of Lemuel's mother, nor a description of the wife of a king, but rather a distinct composition,

and perhaps by a different hand. It consists of twenty-two verses, beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in consecutive order; the first with Aleph, the second with Beth, &c., whence Doederlein calls it the golden A B C for wives. Henry calls it the looking-glass for ladies, into which they should look and by which they should dress themselves.

10. *Who can find:* "This intimates that good women are very scarce; that he that designs to marry ought to seek diligently for such a one, and to take heed that he be not biased by beauty or gayety, wealth or parentage, dressing well or dancing well, for all these may be and yet the woman not be virtuous; and there is many a woman truly virtuous who yet is not recommended by these advantages." Henry. — *good wife.* The term *good* expresses the idea of the original better than virtuous. A capable as well as a virtuous woman is denoted, as is evident not only from the original term, but from the description which follows. The passage is a delineation of the *ideal* of a Hebrew housewife.

11. — *trusts*, &c.: i. e. for the prudent and faithful management of all his domestic affairs. — *of gain:* i. e. by her industry and economy her husband is enriched with provision for the family.

12. *All the days of her life:* i. e. not at first only, or now and then, by fits and starts, but constantly and perpetually.

13. — *wool and flax.* It is well known that the most noble females among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans were engaged in labors of this kind. — *works willingly*, &c.: more literally, *works with the delight of her hands:* she makes it appear that her work is not her drudgery, but her delight.

14. — *brings her food*, &c.: by the sale of her homespun commodities she procures provision from distant places.

16. By her industry and economy she not only provides for the household, but even adds to her husband's possessions.

17. — *girds her loins:* i. e. what she does she does with all her might. See the note on Job xii. 21.

18. — *her lamp is not extinguished*, &c.: she continues her labors beyond the close of the day. Of course the expression is not to be understood to the letter. Comp. Virg. Æn. viii. 407, et seqq. Umbreit, who often strains his ingenuity to find a new meaning, supposes the expression to be an image of prosperity, as in ch. xiii. 9, xx. 20.

21. — *clothed with scarlet:* i. e. not only protected from the cold, but even splendidly arrayed. Comp. 2 Sam. i. 24.

23. — *known in the gates*, &c. This may mean that he is distinguished by the richness of his dress, which his wife has provided for him by her industry. Comp. Hom. Odys. vi. 60, &c. Or, that the husband is freed, by the industry and good management of his wife, from all cares but those of public business.

24. — *linen garments :* probably a linen under-garment. Adam Clarke observes : — " Some such garments as these are still worn by ladies in India and China, and are so thin and transparent, that every part of the body may be seen through them. I have many representations of persons clothed in this way before me, both of the Chinese, the Hindoo, and the Malabar ladies." See also Gesen. ad verb. — *girdles.* Girdles were sometimes of so rich a texture as to be considered a valuable present.

25. *Strength and honor are her clothing :* i. e. Her greatest ornaments, however, are her strong and active mind, her honorable conduct, and her good name. — *she laughs*, &c. : i. e. she lives in tranquillity of mind ; she has no concern about want or trouble in future time.

26. — *with wisdom :* she is neither silent through ignorance or sullenness, nor yet full of vain and unprofitable gossip. Her conversation is wise and instructive. — *kind instruction :* she is ever ready to give instruction or advice, and that not with the authority of a dictator, but with the affection of a friend.

27. — *ways of her household :* she carefully oversees the domestics and laborers of her family, so that they shall have their allotted work, and attend to it with diligence. — *bread of idleness :* i. e. gotten without labor. In connection with the preceding line, the sense may be, that her living is earned by her domestics, whom her activity stimulates to diligence.

29. *Many daughters :* i. e. Many women. Comp. Gen. xxxiv. 1, Ezek. xxx. 18.

30. *Grace :* i. e. Gracefulness, elegance of form and manners. — *deceitful :* i. e. it disappoints expectation, being of short duration, or unable to give the permanent satisfaction which the husband promised himself from it. — *vain :* i. e. like a breath, a vapor, a mist, perishing, soon gone.

31. — *fruit of her hands :* i. e. the praise which she has well earned by her labors. — *the gates :* i. e. the places of public concourse.

NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES.

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1. The term *Ecclesiastes* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew קֹהֶלֶת, *Koheleth*, which is the title of the book. The word *Preacher* conveys the meaning of the original as well as any English term. The Greek rendering, *Ecclesiastes*, is the more literal, as the Hebrew noun is derived from a verb signifying *to call together*, *to assemble;* and the secondary meaning, *preacher*, comes from the purpose for which the assembly is called, namely, to be addressed. As no son of David was king at Jerusalem except Solomon, there can be no reasonable doubt that he is designated as the Preacher.

In ch. i. 2–11, the Preacher announces the principal subject of his book, the vanity of human things, and illustrates it by the unprofitableness of human striving and labor, ver. 3; and by the instances of perpetual change and wearisome vicissitude in the natural world, while nothing new is brought to pass, and no rest is attained. In endeavouring to illustrate the idea, that the mind of man receives no satisfaction from his labors and experiences, the writer seems to impart his own feelings to inanimate nature, and to represent it as wearying itself with incessant change, without effecting any thing new; as it were, without satisfying itself, or gaining any thing by its labors. All is perpetual change, wearisome labor, and no rest. The sea is not made full by the streams, and the mind of man is not satisfied by all that he learns or enjoys in the world.

Knobel regards the reference to the sun, the wind, and the streams as designed to show the fruitlessness of human efforts in consequence of the unchangeableness of nature's operations, and the impossibility of man's altering what is fixed by an established law of nature. But the author seems to describe, not the constancy of nature, but of her changes. Besides, the mere constancy of outward nature does not seem to present a strong reason against human striving in general; but only against striving in opposition to natural laws.

2. *Mere vanity.* I had some hesitation in regard to substituting this phrase for the well known *Vanity of vanities*, but the latter expression is a Hebraism which does not harmonize with the English idiom, and to some persons does not convey a distinct idea.

3. *What profit:* i. e. What advantage which can compensate him for his labor, and leave a balance in his favor. Or, what advantage which he would not have had without anxious and laborious striving.

4. *One generation*, &c. Some connect this verse with the preceding one, supposing it to illustrate the vanity of human exertions, from the consideration that man at death must leave the results of them. It appears to me more natural to suppose that the writer adduces the fact of the continually changing generations of men as an illustration of the vanity of human things.

7. — *to the place*, &c.: i. e. by subterraneous passages and channels, or by evaporation and rain, they return to the fountains and streams. It is mentioned as an instance of the vanity of human things, that the waters, when they have arrived at the sea, where they had so much desired, as it were, to arrive, hasten back to their springs, where again they do not rest, but return again to the sea. "Thus all things in the world are movable and mutable, and subject to a continual toil and toss, constant in nothing but inconstancy, still going, never resting."

8. *All words become weary.* This is the most literal rendering, and most probable from the connection. Otherwise, *All things are full of labor:* All other things, as well as the sun, the wind, and the streams, are in perpetual motion and wearisome agitation. There is no rest to material things, and no satisfaction to the mind of man.

9. *The thing that has been*, &c. The writer seems to regard it as an additional illustration of the vanity of human things, that, while there is perpetual change, there is no novelty; that there is

a perpetual recurrence of the same things. The passage seems to express the feeling of satiety and disgust with which human life is sometimes regarded. The following passage from Seneca, Epist. XXIV., is quoted by Rosenmüller to illustrate these verses: — "Quosdam subit eadem faciendi videndique satietas, et vitæ non odium, sed fastidium; in quod prolabimur, ipsa impellente philosophia, dum dicimus: Quousque eadem? Nempe expergiscar, dormiam, satiabor, esuriam, algebo, æstuabo; nullius rei finis est; sed in orbem nexa sunt omnia; fugiunt ac sequuntur. Diem nox premit, dies noctem; æstas in autumnum desinit, autumno hyems instat, quæ vere compescitur. Omnia transeunt, ut revertantur; nihil novi video; nihil novi facio. Fit aliquando et hujus rei nausea. Multi sunt qui non acerbum judicent vivere, sed superfluum."

10. *It has been*, &c.: i. e. If any one supposes any thing which takes place to be new, he is deceived. For it certainly has occurred long before.

11. — *no remembrance.* A reason seems to be assigned here why some esteem things new which are really old; namely, ignorance of ancient times, want of records of the past.

12–18. Having illustrated his declaration, that all was vanity, by general arguments, drawn from the phenomena of the world, the author now represents Solomon as appealing to his own experience as an additional illustration of what he had said. And, first, from ver. 13 to the end of the chapter, he aims to show how vain and unsatisfactory is the pursuit and the acquisition of knowledge. The fame of Solomon for wisdom makes his example a striking illustration of the sentiment which it is brought to illustrate.

13. — *an evil business*, &c.: i. e. a source of pain and vexation. Knowledge seems to be thus represented, 1. On account of the labor and weariness which attend its pursuit, ch. xii. 12; but, 2. chiefly, on account of the perplexing, imperfect, painful subjects of contemplation which it presents to the mind, ver. 14, 15. Dr. South, in his Sermon on the Evils of Knowledge, observes: — "Knowledge is the parent of sorrow from its very nature, as being the instrument and means by which the afflicting quality of the object is conveyed to the mind; for, as nothing delights, so nothing troubles, till it is known. The merchant is not troubled as soon as his ship is cast away, but as soon as he hears of it. The affairs and objects that we converse with have most of them a fitness to afflict and disturb the mind. And, as the colors lie dormant and

strike not the eye, till the light actuates them into a visibility, so those afflictive qualities never exert their sting, till knowledge displays them, and slides them into the apprehension." But if good predominates over evil in the universe, (and who can doubt it?) then knowledge, regarded in this light, must be the source of more pleasure than pain.

14. — *all the things*, &c.: i. e. I saw that all human pursuits, all the business in which men engage, and all the objects from which they expect happiness, were vain, unsubstantial, incapable of yielding satisfaction to the mind. In fact, the desire and endeavour to catch and possess something so intangible and unsubstantial as air represent the vanity of human actions and pursuits. — *striving after wind.* This rendering is preferred by Gesenius, De Wette, Rosenmüller, and Knobel. Comp. ver. 17, and in the Hebrew, ch. ii. 22, iv. 16.

15. The design of the proverbial expressions in this verse seems to be to assign a reason why human striving should be vain, and human pursuits should be so incapable of affording satisfaction; namely, the perverseness of human nature, and the imperfections of human things. As that which is by nature crooked cannot by human endeavours be straightened; as the vine, for instance, cannot be made to grow up straight, like the poplar; and as that which is naturally wanting to any thing cannot be supplied by human exertion; for instance, as man cannot be made to possess wings, like a bird, or more than two hands or two feet; so there are incongruities, discords, imperfections in human life and the course of human things, which are irremediable, and render it impossible for man to find complete satisfaction. Hence, the knowledge of the things that are done under the sun gives pain.

17. — *senselessness and folly:* i. e. to observe senseless and foolish conduct, and its consequences.

18. See the note on ver. 13. Henry closes his notes upon this chapter with the following good remark: — "Let us not be driven off from the pursuit of any useful knowledge, but put on patience to break through the sorrow of it; yet let us despair of finding true happiness in this knowledge, and expect it only in the knowledge of God, and the careful discharge of our duty to him. *He that increases* in heavenly wisdom, and in an experimental acquaintance with the principles, powers, and pleasures of the spiritual and divine life, *increases* joy, such as will shortly be consummated in everlasting joy."

Ch. II. 1 – 26. Not having found happiness or the chief good in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge, Solomon is represented in this chapter as seeking it in the pleasures of sense, united with the pursuits of knowledge or philosophy. The result of this pursuit, 1 – 11. He then compares wisdom and folly, and, while asserting the infinite superiority of the former, yet perceives its insufficiency in regard to the attainment of happiness. For the wise man and the fool have a common lot, and a fool often enjoys that for which a wise man fatigues himself, 12 – 23. He then recommends the tranquil, contented, cheerful enjoyment of life's blessings, without anxiety and care about distant objects and perplexing subjects, 24 – 26.

2. *It is mad:* i. e. It is an indication of madness; more appropriate to a madman than to a rational being. — *What avails it?* i. e. What good does it do? What happiness does it confer? At first view, there may appear some inconsistency between this and ver. 24. But here the author is speaking of the pleasure which is pursued and striven for; but in ver. 24, of that which comes unsought.

3. — *while my heart cleaved to wisdom.* Comp. ver. 9. Some suppose the meaning to be, that he was wise in the choice of pleasures, and in the degree to which he pursued them. I rather think the meaning to be, that he united the pursuits of wisdom or philosophy with those of sensual pleasure. — *see what was good,* &c.: i. e. till I should find out by trial whether that supreme good which men ought to propose to themselves and prosecute in life consisted in the pleasures of sense; i. e. in pleasures derived from objects addressed to the senses.

6. — *pools of water.* "At about an hour's distance to the south of Bethlehem are the pools of Solomon. They are three in number, of an oblong figure, and are supported by abutments. The antiquity of their appearance entitles them, Dr. Richardson thinks, to be considered as the work of the Jewish monarch." Modern Traveller. See more in Bush's Illustrations, ad loc. Maundrell observes: — "As to the pools, it is probable enough they may be the same with Solomon's; there not being the like store of excellent spring-water to be met with anywhere else throughout all Palestine. But for the gardens, one may safely affirm, that, if Solomon made them in the rocky ground which is now assigned for them, he demonstrated greater power and wealth in finishing his design, than he did wisdom in choosing the place for it." Travels,

p. 151, Amer. edit. — *the grove that produces trees:* young plantations, or perhaps nurseries, may be intended.

8. — *a chosen woman, and chosen women.* The words thus rendered do not elsewhere occur. From their probable derivation, as well as from the circumstance that the harem is nowhere alluded to as a source of pleasure, if not here, we think we have given the words their true meaning. The singular probably refers to the queen, and the plural to the king's other wives and his concubines. See Gesen. ad verb שִׁדָה.

10. — *my portion*, &c: i. e. the present temporary enjoyment of them was all the benefit I could expect or receive from all my labors. There was no permanent, abiding good.

11. All that he did was performed with labor and was preserved with anxiety, and, above all, the pleasure arising from it was transitory. An aching void was left in his mind. After the freest enjoyment of what is called pleasure, he felt the inward thirst and torment still.

12. Having tried what satisfaction was to be found, first in knowledge, and then in the pleasures of sense, he here compares these two sources of happiness one with another, and passes judgment upon them. — *comes after the king:* i. e. succeeds me in this inquiry or trial respecting happiness. No mere private man can be expected to have a larger experience than so great a king, or be better able to form a judgment respecting the subject of which he is treating. — *already done*, i. e. in the way of experience and discovery as to what is true good.

14. — *in his head:* where they ought to be, in order that he may guard against danger, or foresee advantages. The eyes of the fool are, as it were, in his heels, or in the ends of the earth, Prov. xvii. 24, so that he is likely to stumble, or fail of advantages. — *one event*, &c.: i. e. both are subject to many of the same calamities, and especially to death and oblivion.

15. — *wiser than others:* i. e. to what purpose have I taken so much pains to acquire wisdom. — *This, also, is vanity:* i. e. Although wisdom excels folly, yet it is liable to the charge of vanity, since it has no power to secure its possessor from many of the calamities to which the fool is subject.

18, — *leave it:* i. e. what was obtained by my labor, my possessions.

24. — *to eat, and drink, and let his soul enjoy good in his labor.* The drift and meaning of this language is very different from that

of ch. ii. 1, &c. It is no Epicurean indulgence, no addiction to the mere pleasures of sense, which the author here pronounces to be the best course a man can pursue in order to make the best of a vain world. But, in opposition to the anxious and strenuous pursuit of wisdom, or pleasure, or wealth, he advises to give up anxious cares for distant objects, and about perplexing subjects, and to enjoy, with a tranquil, contented, cheerful mind, the blessings of life, as he goes along. And this tranquil, contented, cheerful spirit, he says, is the gift of God, i. e. "to those who are good in his sight"; ver. 26; i. e. it cannot be had without religion and virtue. This is an important sentiment of this book, and recurs repeatedly as the result of the author's meditations upon life. See ch. iii. 12, 13, 22, v. 18 – 20, vii. 14, viii. 15, ix. 7 – 10, xi. 9. From a comparison of these passages, together with ch. v. 1 – 7, and the whole of ch. xii., it is manifest that it is not sensual or selfish indulgence which the author commends as the best thing which a man can attain in a world of vanity, but only such a cheerful, joyful participation of present blessings as is consistent with the thought of God and retribution, or with obedience to the commands of the Creator. The cheerfulness and the joy which he commends is in opposition to anxious cares about the future, or about unavoidable evils, or to the ambitious, eager pursuit of distant good.

25. *For who has banqueted more*, &c. The meaning seems to be, that Solomon, from his large experience, could tell as well as any one whether the tranquil enjoyment of the greatest outward blessings did, or did not, come from the hand of God; whether those who were not "good in his sight" could have such enjoyment.

26. *For — God gives*, &c. "For this is a blessing which God reserves for him whom he loves; whose sincere piety he rewards with wisdom to judge when, and with knowledge to understand how, he should enjoy and take the comfort of all that he hath; especially with inward joy, satisfaction of heart, and tranquillity of mind, in this favor of God to him, whereby the troublesome affairs of this life are tempered and seasoned; but he delivers up him that regards not God to the most cruel tormentors, which are his unsatiable desires and anxious cares, with busy labors and incessant pains to increase his estate without end, and to heap up vast treasures, which God disposes afterward to those who approve themselves to him in a pious, just, and charitable life, with contented

minds." Patrick. — *This, also, is vanity:* i. e. to the sinner, to get riches for those for whom he never designed them.

Ch. III. 1–15. The design of this passage seems to be to show the vanity of human efforts and anxieties respecting the future, in consequence of the fixed course and established, unavoidable changes of human things. A higher power than man's controls human efforts and destinies. Hence, a quiet enjoyment of life is recommended as true wisdom. See p. 90.

1. — *a fixed period*, &c. I have altered the translation of this and the following verses, because the common version, though more smooth, conveys to many readers the idea of a *fit* season, an *appropriate* time, when men may and ought to do the things therein mentioned, and which, if neglected, will not again recur. But this meaning will not apply to several of the subjects which are enumerated in the following verses. The author is speaking, I conceive, not of a *fit* time, an *appropriate*, *opportune* season, but of a *necessary* change, a period that *must* recur. The thought is somewhat similar to that which is contained in the proverbial expression, that "all things have their *day*."

3. *Killing has its time.* In ver. 1, natural death was spoken of; here, that which comes by violence, as by robbers, assassins, or by course of law, or by accident. — *Breaking down*, &c. At one time buildings are destroyed in war, or by hurricanes, floods, or conflagrations; at another, new edifices are erected in their place.

4. *Weeping*, &c. There are changes in life, such as sickness, loss of relations, &c., moving us to tears, which are succeeded by others effacing the memory of trouble and leading to joy. — *Mourning*, &c. This may be distinguished from weeping, as being a formal, public expression of grief, as dancing is of joy.

5. — *casting stones asunder:* as in the case of edifices, fortifications, &c., which fall into ruin; or they are brought together for building new walls, &c. — *Embracing*, &c.: i. e. a time when we embrace our friends after a long absence, and a time when they are again absent from us. Or, possibly, a time when we live in friendship with any one, and a time when, by change of pursuits or character, we become estranged from him.

6. — *keeping*, &c.: i. e. from attachment to the object, or expectation of benefit from it. — *casting away:* i. e. as worthless.

7. — *rending:* as in great and sudden grief, as Gen. xxxvii. 29, Joel ii. 13. — *sewing:* i. e. when the grief is over; or, perhaps,

making new garments on some occasion of joy. — *Silence:* when men will keep silence through grief, sickness, &c.

8. — *loving.* Love is often followed by hatred.

9. *What profit,* &c. What can his utmost efforts to obtain good or avoid evil avail, while there is such a system of vicissitude and change by the appointment of Providence?

10. — *the labor:* i. e. the labor of the human mind in endeavouring to explore the ways of God in the government of the world, and the appointment of the various vicissitudes of human life.

11. — *makes every thing good in its time.* The meaning seems to be, that every thing which takes place in the course of providence, by divine appointment or permission, is right, so that, all things considered, it could not have been done better, ver. 14; and would appear so, if viewed in relation to its season, tendencies, and relations:

> "And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, whatever is is right."

— *but.* For this use of the Hebrew particle, see ch. iv. 16. — *but he has put the world into the heart of man, so that he understands not,* &c. The translation and interpretation of this passage are attended with much difficulty; first, on account of the ambiguity of the Hebrew term עֹלָם, rendered *world*, and, secondly, on account of the Hebrew negative particles; whether both have their separate force, or whether they unite their force to form one negative. The Hebrew term, in all other instances in which it occurs in the Scriptures, denotes duration, indefinite duration, whether past or future, and sometimes eternal duration; but in the Chaldee and Rabbinic usage, *the world*, *worldly things*, like the Greek *αἰών*, in Eph. ii. 2, and elsewhere; i. e. things which exist in a given period of duration, more or less definite. If we suppose this rendering correct, and that there is but one negation in the sentence, according to the common version, which I follow, the meaning will be, that, according to the same idiom by which he is said to harden the heart of Pharaoh, God has put the cares, or the love, of the world into the hearts of men, so that they cannot discern the propriety and the beautiful harmony of his dispensations, and cannot discern the whole that he does in his providence from beginning to end, but only a part of it. Others give to the term עֹלָם a signification more nearly allied to the common meaning, and render the passage, *And God hath put futurity* or *duration into the* *heart of man;* i. e. the capacity of looking back upon the past, and forward into the future, *except that he cannot understand the work which God doeth from the beginning to the end:* i. e. God has given man the capacity of looking back upon the past and forward into the future, but not in such a measure or degree that he can understand the work of God from beginning to end. The main design of the passage, whichever explanation is adopted, is illustrated by ch. viii. 17: "Then I saw the whole work of God, that a man cannot comprehend that which takes place under the sun; how much soever he labor to search it out, yet shall he not comprehend it; yea, though a wise man resolve to know it, yet shall he not be able to comprehend it."

12. — *enjoy good.* Comp. ch. ii. 24, and the note.

13. — *gift of God:* i. e. "to him that is good in his sight." See the note on ch. ii. 24.

14. — *whatever God does.* The context seems to require this to be understood as referring to the course of things under the divine government, rather than to the works of creation. It sets forth the perfection and uniformity of his conduct in the government of the world. —*for ever:* i. e. is unalterable. Patrick has given a good paraphrase of the verse: — "It is not only very foolish and vain, but a great plague, to be discontented that things go otherwise than we desire; for certain it is, God hath settled them by such an eternal and immutable law, in that course and order before described, ver. 1–3, &c., in which nothing is superfluous, nothing wanting, that it is not in the power of man to make the least alteration one way or other; therefore we must alter ourselves, and not murmur that we cannot change the course of things, which God hath thus immovably fixed, not to make us miserable, by fretting at it, but happy, by reverent submission to the divine government, and humble patience under those troubles which we cannot honestly avoid, and a due care not to offend the divine majesty, whose will shall be done, one way or other, if not by us, yet upon us."

15. — *recalls that which is past:* i. e. he repeats it; makes the future resemble the past, and substantially the same with it, so that there shall be "nothing new under the sun." "This alone is sufficient to silence all our unprofitable, as well as undutiful, complaints about that which hath always been and ever will be. For we, in this present age, are subject to no other laws than those by which God hath governed the world from the beginning; nor will

the next produce any other method than that wherein he hath already proceeded; but, though that which succeeds thrusts out what went before, it brings the very same things about again, as constantly as spring and fall, summer and winter, return in their seasons." Patrick.

16–22. The vanity of human things is illustrated in this passage from the prevalence of injustice, and the resemblance of men to brutes in respect to hardships and death. Hence the usual inference of the writer, that man should lead a quiet, cheerful life, without anxiety concerning the unknown future.

16. — *in the place of justice:* i. e. where justice ought specially to be, where rulers or judges professed to administer justice. The meaning may, however, be more general, referring to justice between man and man. The fact to which he refers seems to be introduced as a new instance of the vanity of human things.

17. *For there:* i. e. when God shall bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing. Ch. xii. 14, xi. 9, Dan. vii. 9, 10, Job xix. 29. It is a question, whether the judgment or retribution here spoken of was expected by the writer to take place in the present or in the future world. From the context, ver. 18–21, and from other passages in the book, I think it most probable that the present life was exclusively in his view. The passage in Daniel, above referred to, is a good illustration of a time of judgment; for undoubtedly it relates to a judgment in the present world. So the book of Job, ch. xix. 29, contains mention of a judgment, although the plan and the contents of that work exclude the idea of a retribution after death. If the Preacher had held a belief in a state of retribution after death, his faith must have been manifested in other parts of the work, and applied to the solution of the doubts and difficulties relating to the course of human things which perplexed him. "Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel." The phrase, *will judge the righteous and the wicked*, means will acquit and deliver the righteous, and condemn and punish the wicked.

19. — *one spirit in them:* i. e. the spirit of life. Comp. ch. viii. 8, xii. 7, Judges xv. 19, 1 Sam. xxx. 12, Ezek. xxxvii. 8, Hab. ii. 19. Sometimes this *vital spirit* is called *the spirit* or *breath of God*, as having been imparted by him, breathed by him into the nostrils of men, and as returning to him again. See Job xxvii. 3. In Job xxxiv. 14, he is said to *take back his spirit*, when men die. Comp. Ps. civ. 29, 30. From a comparison of the preceding refer-

ences, it will appear, that, according to Hebrew usage, the return of the spirit to God denotes simply *death*, and not a return to a state of happy existence with God after death.

21. — *whether it goes upward*, &c. This is the rendering of the Septuagint and all the ancient versions, as also of Luther, and appears to agree better with the Hebrew idiom, and with the connection, than that of the common version. The term *spirit* in this verse is the same in the original as in verse 19, where it is said that *one spirit* is in men and brutes. In both cases I understand it as denoting the animal or vital spirit It seems to me improbable, that, in a sentence so closely connected with verse 19, there should be any change in the meaning of the term *spirit*, especially as it is here applied to brutes as well as to men, and as the spirit of all mankind, the bad as well as the good, seems to be spoken of in comparison with that of brutes. The Preacher seems to me to express a doubt whether man, whom he represents to be like the brutes in many respects, differs from them in this, that the spirit of men ascends upward, or returns to God, and that of brutes goes downward, or mingles with dust. I do not understand him to refer to the personal, conscious immortality of either; for, in verse 19, he says, "One lot befalls both. As the one dies, so dies the other. Yea, there is one spirit in them, and a man has no preeminence above a beast." The doubt is, whether the vital spirit of man is more honorably disposed of after death than that of a brute. In ch. xii. 7, it is true, he positively affirms that the spirit of man "returns to God." But it is not very probable that he doubts here what he affirms there. The doubt is, whether any different disposition is made of the soul of a man and that of a brute; whether the latter may not go upward as well as the former. The foregoing exposition of the passage seems to be confirmed by the inference which is drawn from it in verse 22. If the writer had believed that man was distinguished from beasts by a destiny to an immortal conscious existence, and to a state of righteous retribution, and had, as many suppose, intended to express his surprise that so few *regarded*, as the writer did, the different destiny of the spirits of men and brutes, would his inference from the passage have been exactly what it is in verse 22? Is not this inference rather drawn from what the writer considers as the resemblance of man to the brutes in all the points in which he compares them? It ought not to appear strange to any one, that the writer did not believe in doctrines which had never been revealed to him, or to

his countrymen. The other mode of understanding the verse is expressed in the paraphrase of Patrick. "As for the spirit, which makes all the difference between the beasts and us, that is invisible; and where shall we find a man, especially among those great persons spoken of before, who seriously considers it, and believes that the souls of all mankind go to God that gave them, to be judged by him, whereas the souls of beasts perish with them?" If we were to allow that *who knows* may here denote *who considers* or *regards*, the verse as thus expounded seems to be quite inconsistent with the writer's train of thought. See the note on ch. xii. 7.

22. And, therefore, considering that such is the vanity of human life, and that man in his condition and his end so much resembles the brutes, "I was confirmed in my former opinion," ch. ii. 24, "that it is best for a man herein also to imitate the beasts; by enjoying freely the good things God has blessed him withal, and taking all the comfort he can find in them at present, without solicitous care about the future; for this is all he can be sure of; he shall not enjoy that hereafter which he makes no use of now; much less, when he is dead, can he be brought back again to take any pleasure in the fruit of all his labors, or see what becomes of them." Patrick. See the note on ch. ii. 24.

Ch. IV. In this chapter the author goes on to illustrate the vanity of human things, or the obstacles which prevent a tranquil and happy life, by referring to the sufferings of the oppressed; to the envy which is excited towards the prosperous; to the evils of avarice and of solitude; and those which attend royalty, arising from the infirmities of its possessor and the fickleness of the people.

1. *Then I turned:* i. e. from the preceding subject of contemplation and remark to that which follows.

2, 3. Comp. Job iii. 11–23.

4. *This, also, is vanity:* namely, that an industrious and successful man should meet with envy and obloquy instead of good-will and applause.

5. — *eats his own flesh.* This may mean that the fool is so tormented with envy, that he is, as it were, consumed, or devoured by it. So, *ὃν ϑυμὸν ϰατέδων*, Hom. Il. vi. 202; Quisnam illic homo est, qui ipsus se comest, tristis, oculis malis? Plaut. Trucul. ii. 7, 36. Gesenius observes that such a man is called by the Arabs *a devourer of himself.* But he does not, as he ought, pro-

duce the proof of this assertion. Another meaning of the verse may be, that the fool, perceiving that diligence is attended with envy, goes to the opposite extreme of folding his hands and doing nothing, and thus is reduced to such poverty, that he is ready to eat his own flesh through extremity of hunger. This seems better suited to the connection.

6. *Better*, &c.: i. e. in reference to ver. 4, "Better is a moderate estate, gotten honestly with moderate diligence, and enjoyed handsomely with perfect contentment, than the greatest treasures, gotten by oppression or with infinite toil, and enjoyed with anxious thoughts and fretting cares, and exposing a man either to the hatred or the envy of others." Patrick.

7–12. In these verses is described the vanity of avarice, especially in one who lives in solitude, and has no near friend to whom he may leave his wealth. The state of solitude is then contrasted with the advantages of social and married life.

9. — *good reward:* i. e. profitable results. By mutual counsel and assistance they effect much more than they could separately.

12. — *threefold cord*, &c. No more than a bundle of arrows or sticks; though each single thread, arrow, or stick may easily be broken.

13. *Better*, &c. The author draws a new illustration of the vanity of human life from the contempt of royalty, when mental vigor is wanting in the possessor of it, and from the general uncertainty and inconstancy of popular favor towards kings.

14. — *out of prison:* i. e. from a very low condition, as was not uncommon in the despotisms of the East, and has not been uncommon in modern times. — *such a one:* i. e. one poor but wise.

15. — *with the child:* i. e. following him, paying their court to him, worshipping the rising rather than the setting sun.

16. — *went forth:* i. e. as a leader. — *not rejoice in him:* i. e. by reason of the love of novelty, the flattery of human hopes, and other circumstances, they will be as weary of the successor, though a wise and worthy prince, as their parents were of his foolish predecessor.

Ch. V. – XII. The remainder of the book is chiefly preceptive, rather than speculative. The author seems to be giving his advice as to the way in which we may best pass through the life of vanity which he has described. See p. 90.

1. *Look well to thy feet*, &c.: i. e. Walk circumspectly. Make

sure and straight steps. Engage in the services of religion with attention, seriousness, deliberation, and sincerity. The metaphor seems to be drawn from the condition of one who is walking in a very slippery path, in which more than ordinary care is necessary to keep him from falling. The expression will thus be similar to that of *taking heed to one's ways.* Some, however, suppose the metaphor to be drawn from the impropriety of entering the houses of the great with dirty feet. Others, from the practice of putting off the shoes on entering a sacred place. — *to hear. To hear* is often used in the sense of *to obey.* See 1 Sam. xv. 22. In this place, it denotes *to obey* the law which is read, rather than simply to hear it, though the latter is implied. — *like fools:* who offer splendid oblations, instead of ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, and as substitutes of piety and obedience.

2. — *words be few.* As you would not, if admitted to the presence of a king, use many words, words which are not weighed and chosen, much less should you multiply words, without care, thought, and reverence, in the presence of him who is higher than the highest.

3. — *with a multitude of matters.* This rendering of the verse is strictly literal, and the meaning is, that, as a dream is attended with, sets forth, or brings forward, many vain and trifling matters, so a fool utters many vain and trifling words. Comp. ver. 7. The objection to the common version is, 1. That it requires too much to be supplied; and, 2. That it neglects the studied antithesis of the original. It makes business the cause of the dream; but the multitude of words is not the cause, but the consequence, of folly. In the Hebrew idiom, *to come with* is often used to denote *to bring forward, to set forth.* Ps. lxvi. 13, lxxi. 16, where *I will come with thy mighty deeds,* means, *I will set forth, celebrate, thy mighty deeds.*

4, 5. Comp. Numb. xxx. 2, &c., Deut. xxiii. 21, 22.

6. — *thy flesh:* i. e. thy weaker part, thyself considered as frail. — *to sin:* i. e. by refusing the self-denial which the vow uttered by the mouth requires. — *before the angel:* probably before the priest, regarded as the messenger of God, the announcer of his will. See Mal. ii. 7. It may be, however, that there is reference to some angel, supposed to preside over the Temple. See Christian Examiner, for Nov. 1838, pp. 210, 211. — *It was a mistake:* i. e. I made a mistake; I acted foolishly and inconsiderately in making such a vow, and therefore hope God will excuse me from paying it.

— *the work of thy hands:* i. e. the product of the work of thy hands, thy estate.

7. — *fear thou God:* i. e. manifest thy fear of God by abstaining from rash and inconsiderate vows.

8. — *alarmed at the matter:* as though injustice would be finally triumphant, and sentence would never be executed against the evil work. — *a higher, who watches:* i. e. over subordinate magistrates there is a higher, or the king, who will call them to account; and over them all is God, who will bring every work of the king, as well as of the subject, into judgment.

9. — *honored by the land.* This rendering of a very difficult passage is adopted by Gesenius, De Wette, and Knobel. The writer, having intimated in the preceding verse that oppression would be likely to meet with punishment, is naturally led to speak of the advantage to a state of having a king so wise and just, that oppression by subordinate magistrates would seldom occur, when the king was honored by the land, i. e. the inhabitants. It is not improbable, that there is a play upon the term נֶעֱבָּד, *honored*, which can be expressed better in Latin than in English. It is said to be a great advantage to a country, cum ager, qui alibi *colitur*, *colit* regem.

11. — *that eat them.* "The more meat, the more mouths. The more men have, the better house they must keep; the more servants employ, the more guests entertain; the more give to the poor, and the more will they have hanging on them; for where the carcass is, the eagles will be. What we have more than food and raiment, we have for others; and then what good is there to the owners themselves, but the pleasure of beholding them with their eyes? And a poor pleasure it is; an empty speculation is all the difference between the owners and the sharers." Henry.

"*P.* What riches give us, let us then inquire;
Meat, fire, and clothes. *B.* What more? *P.* Meat, clothes, and fire.
Is this too little? would you more than live?"
Pope's Moral Essays, Epist. iii. 79.

—— "Congestis undique saccis
Indormis inhians, et tanquam parcere sacris
Cogeris, aut pictis tanquam gaudere tabellis."
Hor. Sat. i. 1, 70.

"On every side the numerous bags are piled,
Whose hallowed stores must never be defiled

To human use; while you transported gaze,
As if, like pictures, they were formed to please."

12. — *repletion:* i. e. of his stomach with various delicacies, more than can be digested. Some, however, understand abundance of wealth, which brings cares and fears.

"An vigilare metu exanimem, noctesque diesque
Formidare malos fures, incendia, servos,
Ne te compilent fugientes; hoc juvat? horum
Semper ego optârim pauperrimus esse bonorum." Id. 76.

"But, with continual watching almost dead,
House-breaking thieves, and midnight fires to dread,
Or the suspected slave's untimely flight
With the dear pelf; if this be thy delight,
Be it my fate, so Heaven in bounty please,
Still to be poor of blessings such as these."
Francis's Translation.

13. — *to his hurt:* by exposing him to danger from thieves, as represented in the last quotation from Horace; or, by causing mental distress when he loses them, as described in the next verse.

14. — *in his hand.* There seems to be no consideration which decides conclusively whether *his* refers to the father, who by calamity is deprived of the power of leaving any thing to the son for whom he endured all his labors, or whether it refers to the son, who has nothing in his possession after his father's death. I incline to the former supposition.

15. These things, indeed, do not always happen; but it is at least certain, that, though he die possessed of all that he has acquired, yet he cannot carry one farthing away with him. See Job i. 21, 1 Tim. vi. 7. So Propertius, L. iii. Eleg. 3. vs. 13, 14: —

"Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas,
Nudus ab inferna, stulte, vehere rate."

16. — *for wind:* i. e. for riches, which are empty and unsatisfying, uncertain and transitory, which no man can retain more than he can wind. Comp. Prov. xxiii. 5.

17. — *he ate in darkness:* i. e. lived in disquietude, vexation, and fear.

18. See the note on ch. ii. 24. — *his portion:* i. e. the use and enjoyment of one's possessions is all that can be truly called his own; all the good which he can receive from them.

19. — *gift of God:* i. e. to the good man. See ch. ii. 26.

20. — *thinks not much*, &c. He does not torment himself with useless grief about the past misfortunes of his life, which he cannot remedy, nor with vain anxiety about future ones, which he cannot avoid. — *answers him with:* i. e. bestows upon him joy, as it were, in answer to his desires.

Ch. VI. 1–6. The folly and misery of avarice; of hoarding without enjoying or using.

1. — *God gives him not to taste*, &c.: on account of his avaricious mind, his temper ever anxious about the future, his disposition to neglect the present use and enjoyment of his wealth.

3. — *his soul be not satisfied with good:* i. e. if he have not a cheerful, contented mind, if he do not enjoy his property, &c. — *and he have no burial:* either because the strangers to whom his property is left have grudged him the expense of a decent burial, or because he has died in foreign lands, or drowned in a foreign sea, whither he had gone in quest of wealth. How much importance the Hebrews attached to a decent burial appears from Is. xiv. 19, 20, Job xxvii. 19, Ps. lxxix. 2.

4. — *comes in vanity:* i. e. the abortion comes vainly, to no purpose. — *goes down into darkness:* i. e. is immediately buried, put out of sight. — *its name is covered*, &c.: i. e. no mention is made of it.

6. — *and see no good*, &c.: i. e. enjoy no good, have no enjoyment of the good things of life. — *to one place:* i. e. the grave. And if they who live long have no enjoyment of life, it follows that they who die soonest have the most rest. "Omnes eodem cogimur." Hor. Carm. ii. 3, 25.

> "Serius aut citius sedem properamus ad unam;
> Tendimus huc omnes; hæc est domus ultima."
> Ovid. Metam. x. 33, 34.

7. — *for his mouth*, &c. Although all that a man can get by his labors is food necessary for the support of life (see ch. v. 11, and the note), yet such is the vanity of the world and the folly of mankind, that the desires of men are insatiable.

8. *For what advantage*, &c. The most natural meaning of this verse seems to be this. Since the support of life, or meat, clothes, and fire, is the chief advantage of wealth, what advantage has the wise man over the fool, or what advantage has the poor man who

knows how to walk before the living, i. e. who is ingenious, enterprising, knowing how to gain the favor of the rich, over the poor man who is destitute of these advantages, who does not know how to walk before the living? For the most foolish, and the most ignorant and rude of the poor, can by the labor of their hands find bread to fill their mouths, &c. Others understand the particle מַה, *what*, in the sense of *how great*. How great is the advantage of the wise man, who knows how to enjoy life, over the foolish, avaricious man! So Rosenmüller. Others, as Le Clerc, understand the particle in opposite senses in the two clauses of the verse. How little advantage has the wise man over the poor! How great an advantage has the poor, who knows how to walk before the living, over him who does not! Both these critics seem to me to give the particle a sense which it will hardly bear.

9. — *sight of the eyes*, &c.: i. e. the enjoyment, the making the best, of what is present is better than the wandering of the soul after things at a distance, and affecting a variety of imaginary gratifications which usually end in vexation.

10. — *that has his name long been called.* The meaning of this sentence is not very obvious. It seems, however, to intimate that the condition and fortunes of every man are known and appointed by the Almighty; that they depend more upon an established course of things than upon his personal striving. Comp. ch. iii. 1–9. Hence the folly of excessive exertion and anxiety. Others suppose the meaning to be, Man is frail, earthy, mortal, according to the name *Adam*, which God gave him when he formed him out of the dust; *Adam* being supposed to denote *earth*. Gen. ii. 7.

11. — *increase vanity*, &c. Verses 11 and 12 seem to be added as a conclusion of all that he has said respecting the toil, care, and anxiety which what are called the good things of this life bring with them. Comp. ver. 8, and the note.

12. — *after him under the sun:* i. e. he knows not who shall possess his acquisitions, or whether the future owners of his possessions will use or abuse them. Whence it follows that it is best for a man to live a tranquil, unambitious life, agreeably to verses 7–9.

Ch. VII. 1–VIII. 13. The design of this portion is to give certain proverbs or precepts for the guidance, consolation, or support of men in their passage through the world, whose vanity he has described, and continues to set forth by incidental remarks. The general purport of these precepts is to inculcate the necessity of regulating our thoughts, dispositions, desires, even to an extent which may seem paradoxical to the mass of mankind, and conforming them to the course of things, or the appointments of the Creator. For precepts, just, comprehensive, and complete, having a certain resemblance to those of the Preacher, see the Sermon on the Mount.

1. — *precious perfume:* such as was used in the East, as a part of personal comfort, elegance, and dress. "The custom of anointing with oil or perfume was also common among the Greeks and Romans; especially the anointing of guests at feasts and other entertainments." See Potter's Grec. Ant., Vol. II., p. 385; Adam's Rom. Ant., p. 144; Hor. Od. ii. 7, 11, iii. 29; Joseph. Ant., xix. 4, 1, and 9, 1; Iliad, xiv. 171. The same custom is still prevalent in the East. Tavernier says, that "among the Arabs olive-oil is regarded as a very agreeable present. When any one offers it to them, they immediately take off their turban and anoint their head, face, and beard, raising their eyes to heaven at the same time, and exclaiming, 'Thanks be to God.'" Rosenmül. A. ü. N. Morgenland, Vol. IV., p. 117. — *day of one's death.* Since life is so full of vexation and misery, it is a more desirable thing for a man to go out of it than to come into it, although it is the practice of almost all mankind to celebrate their own or children's birthdays with solemn feasts and rejoicings, and their deaths with all expressions of sorrow. Some suppose that it is to be understood from the preceding line, that the death of one *who leaves a good name behind him* is better, &c. It seems to me more agreeable to the spirit and tenor of the book to understand the declaration as universal in its application. Comp. ch. vi. 3–5.

2. — *for that:* i. e. death. In Schultens' Anthologia, &c., is the following sentiment of an Arabic poet: —

> "When thou hearest lamentations for the dead, be there!
> But if thou art invited to a feast, beware!"

See Ros. ad loc.

4. *The heart of the wise,* &c.: even when their bodies are absent. There is no inconsistency between this remark and those passages which inculcate the enjoyment of the present. Because by the enjoyment of the present the writer means not sensual or riotous pleasure, but the grateful use of the good which Heaven sends, in opposition to excessive striving and anxiety about the future.

5. — *song of fools:* i. e. the music, songs, and jests of merry companions, which are commonly regarded as delightful.

6. — *crackling of thorns:* which make a great noise and blaze, as if they would produce a mighty heat, but leave the water as cold as they found it. — *laughter of a fool:* i. e. quickly passing away, doing no good, but rather terminating in a sad silence.

7. — *the gain of oppression.* From speaking of fools, the Preacher is led to a particular instance of folly, namely, the grasping at unjust gain, bribes, &c., which take away from wise men their judgment and reason. Comp. Exod. xxiii. 8, Deut. xvi. 19, Prov. xv. 27.

8. *Better is the end.* If this verse is connected in sense with the preceding, the meaning is, that the end of the practice of bribery will show that he that takes it is not a gainer by it. But as there is often no connection between one proverb and the preceding, the meaning may be general, that we cannot judge well of things till they are brought to a conclusion. Some things which are pleasant and promising at first end in ruin; and some things difficult and painful at first have a happy termination. — *patient in spirit:* who quietly waits for the end of things. — *proud in spirit:* pride being the chief cause of impatience. Or this last line may be understood more generally.

9. — *anger rests:* i. e. dwells, has its abode; is ever at hand on all occasions.

10. In this verse the Preacher condemns a querulous, repining spirit, which indulges itself in unavailing wishes that it had lived in what it regards the good old times, instead of accommodating itself to the present state of things. Perhaps complaints even against the Governor of the world may be referred to. This spirit has been common in all ages. Comp. Hor. Ars Poet. 173.

> "Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
> Se puero, censor castigatorque minorum."

The notion of the superiority of former ages is still prevalent in the East. "The Hindoos have four ages, which nearly correspond with the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages of the Western heathen. In the first age, called *Kretha*, they say the corn sprang up spontaneously, and required no attention; in the second, named *Treatha*, the justice of kings and the blessings of the righteous caused it to grow; in the third, called *Tuvara*, rain produced it; but in this, the fourth age, called *Kally*, many works have to be done to cause it to grow. 'Our fathers,' say they, 'had three harvests in the year; the trees also gave an abundance of fruit. Where is now the cheapness of provisions? the abundance of fish? the fruitful flocks? the rivers of milk? the plenty of water? Where the pleasures? Where the docility of animals? Where the righteousness, the truth, and affection? Where the riches, the peace, the plenty? Where the mighty men? Where the chaste and beautiful mothers, with their fifteen or sixteen children? Alas, alas! they are all fled.'" Roberts's Illustrations, ad loc.

11. — *as good*, &c.: it is as desirable to possess wisdom as to inherit a fortune; yea, even more so. — *that see the sun:* i. e. that live.

12. — *gives life*, &c.: literally, *vivifies:* i. e. makes them flourishing, contented, happy. So the noun *life* is used in Proverbs iv. 22, 23, xii. 28, and many other places. "It marvellously supports, revives, and comforts the souls of those who are owners of it, under all the evils which it could not help them by honest means to avoid." Patrick.

13. From the praise of wisdom the Preacher passes to a principal exercise of it, namely, the contemplation of the providence of God. — *the work of God:* i. e. *what God does:* i. e. in the circumstances and events which we witness. We are instructed in this verse to regard our condition as appointed by God, and to suit our minds to it; for we cannot bring things to our minds, and therefore it is best to strive to conform our minds to our condition, whether it be one of prosperity or adversity.

14. — *be joyful.* See the note on ch. ii. 24. — *look for a day of adversity.* So I translate, because I doubt whether the verb רָאָה, which literally means *to see*, can be used to denote what we understand by the term *consider.* It would be against the author's views to recommend anxiety about the future, but it is not anxiety to remember in the day of prosperity that it may not always last. We are the better prepared to endure the storm when it comes, if we remember that sooner or later it will come to all. — *what shall befall him in the future:* i. e. God has ordained that prosperity and adversity shall succeed each other in the course of men's lives, so that they cannot foresee what shall happen to them in the future, and thus may live in constant dependence upon God, and submission to his will.

15. *All this:* i. e. All that I have mentioned, and am about to mention. — *my days of vanity:* i. e. my vain life. — *in their*

righteousness: or, *by* their righteousness. The meaning assigned to verses 15, 16, and 17, by Patrick, in his paraphrase, seems to me as probable as any: — "It seems very hard that a just man's integrity should not be able to preserve him, but he is therefore perhaps destroyed because he is better than others, when a wicked man escapes, nay, is countenanced and encouraged, or suffered to prolong his days in (and perhaps by) his wickedness. But, besides other things which may be replied to this (as that good men are sometimes removed from, and wicked reserved unto, future evils), it must be noted, also, that some pious men are more strict and rigid than they need be, and not so prudent as they ought to be, but unnecessarily expose themselves to danger: And, therefore, it is good advice, in order to a safe and quiet passage through this life, to be temperate in thy zeal, and not to overdo, either by extending thy own duty beyond the divine commandment, or by correcting the inveterate vices of others, and opposing the vulgar opinions too severely or unseasonably, whereby they are only exasperated and enraged, but not at all amended; for why should a man bring a mischief upon himself without any benefit unto others? And, on the other side, let not impunity tempt any man to presume to grow so enormously wicked and foolish, as to embrace and follow the lewdest opinions; for this may awaken the public justice against him, even for the common safety; or the divine vengeance, nay, his own excessive wickedness, may cut him off before he come to the natural term of his life." Rosenmüller supposes these precepts to have particular reference to judges and rulers in the administration of laws. But this supposition does not seem to be supported by verse 17.

18. — *take hold of this:* i. e. the counsel about avoiding wickedness and folly, ver. 17. — *from that:* i. e. the advice in ver. 16. — *all those things:* i. e. the extremes which have been mentioned, and their evil consequences.

19. Comp. ch. ix. 15–18, Prov. xxi. 22, xxiv. 5.

21. *Give no heed,* &c. Lord Bacon, as quoted by Patrick ad loc., thus remarks on this verse: — "It is a matter almost beyond belief, what disturbance is created by unprofitable curiosity about those things that concern our personal interest; that is, when we make a too scrupulous inquiry after such secrets, which, once disclosed and found out, do but cause a disquiet of mind, and nothing conduce to the advancing of our designs. For, first, there follows vexation and disquiet of mind; human affairs being so full of

treachery and ingratitude, that, if there could be procured a magical glass in which we might behold the hatreds and whatsoever malicious contrivances are anywhere raised up against us, it would be better for us if such a glass were forthwith thrown away and broken in pieces. For things of this nature are like the murmurs of the leaves of trees, which in a short time vanish. Secondly, This curiosity loads the mind too much with suspicions and ungrounded jealousies; which is the most capital enemy to counsels, and renders them inconstant and involved. Thirdly, The same curiosity doth sometimes fix those evils which otherwise of themselves would pass by us and fly away. For it is a dangerous thing to irritate the consciences of men; who, if they think themselves to lie undiscovered, are easily changed for the better; but, if they perceive themselves to be detected, drive out one mischief by another. And therefore it was deservedly esteemed the highest wisdom in Pompey the Great, that he instantly burnt all Sertorius's papers, unperused by himself, or suffered to be seen by others." — "Be not solicitous or inquisitive to know what people say of thee; if they speak well of thee, it will feed thy pride, — if ill, it will stir up thy passion." Henry.

23. — *it was far from me:* i. e. I fell far short of the perfection of wisdom to which I aspired.

24. — *far off*, &c.: i. e. perfect wisdom, a knowledge of the reasons of all that occurs in the world. Comp. ch. i. 13.

28. — *is this:* namely, a wise and virtuous woman. This is spoken in conformity with the Oriental notions of the female sex. See Job xiv. 1, and the note.

29. — *God has made man upright.* That *man* is used in the collective sense denoting all mankind, including especially the men and women who are just before mentioned, is evident from the plural verb, *they seek out.* — *devices:* i. e. perverse and evil pursuits. Jerome remarks on this passage: — "Ne videretur communem hominum damnare naturam, et Deum auctorem facere mali, dum talium conditor est qui malum vitare non possint, argute præcavit, et ait, bonos nos a Deo creatos; sed quia libero sumus arbitrio derelicti, vitio nostro ad pejora labi, dum majora quærimus, et ultra vires nostras varia cogitamus."

Ch. VIII. 1. — *brightens his countenance:* i. e. enlivens it, makes it cheerful and mild, beaming kindness. Comp. Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

2. — *oath of God:* i. e. the oath of allegiance to the king, which you called God to witness.

3. — *to depart from him:* i. e. in dislike or discontent, quitting his service or obedience.

4. — *powerful:* i. e. he has instruments enough to execute all he commands, and there is none to call him to account for his conduct.

5. — *time and judgment.* Most modern interpreters translate *time and manner:* i. e. a wise man will attempt to correct what he sees to be wrong in government only at a fit time, and in the best way. He will not be rash and violent in opposition to the powers that be. The passage thus has a good meaning. But it is doubtful whether this signification, *manner*, be justified by the usage of the term מִשְׁפָּט in the Scriptures. In this book it has a different sense in all other passages in which it occurs. The word *time*, too, seems to be used in a peculiar way. Thus, in ch. iii. 17, "For there shall be *a time* for every employment and for every work." Here the connection seems to require us to understand a time *of judgment.* So, in ch. ix. 12, "Man knows not *his time*": i. e. the time when calamity or death shall come upon him. So, in Job xxiv. 1, the term denotes the time when one may experience the evil consequences of imprudence, rashness, or misconduct. *Judgment*, it is well known, often denotes retribution or punishment.

6. *For to every thing there is a time and judgment:* i. e. time when the consequences of it shall be experienced and retribution take place. See the note on the preceding verse. Otherwise, *time and manner*, in the sense above referred to.

8. We need not seek for any closer connection of this verse with the preceding than to suppose it an illustration of human misery, mentioned in ver. 6, or of man's ignorance of the future, in his being unable to predict the day of his death. — *the spirit:* i. e. his vital spirit, breath of life. See ch. iii. 19. — *discharge*, &c.: in the conflict between life and death all must engage and all be subdued.

9. — *to his hurt:* i. e. to the injury and oppression of the governed. Man oppresses his fellow-man.

10. — *the wicked buried:* i. e. I saw those who deserved infamy obtaining an honorable burial. The Hebrews held the burial of the dead to be a subject of the utmost importance. To be cast out unburied was considered as in the highest degree ignominious and

terrible. Is. xiv. 19, 20, Jer. vii. 33, xxii. 19. — *coming and going from the holy place :* i. e. coming into life and going out of it, from the sacred city of Jerusalem, or, perhaps, from the royal palace. The verb signifying *to go*, in Hebrew, as in the Greek, English, and other languages, is often used as a euphemism to denote death. — *were forgotten :* i. e. did not receive that place in the memory of their fellow-citizens which their virtues deserved. Comp. Is. lvii. 1. The sentiment of the verse I understand to be similar to that in verse 14. In regard to the rendering, *the righteous*, literally, *they who did right*, the Hebrew word כֵּן means *right*, or *so*, according to the connection. Comp. Numb. xxvii. 7, 2 Kings vii. 9. Those who prefer the latter rendering will regard the whole verse as relating to the wicked. It will then refer to ill-gotten or ill-used honor and power. They who possess the highest degrees of either will soon come to the grave and be forgotten.

11. *Because sentence*, &c. : i. e. of retribution, punishment. Comp. ch. xii. 14. The sentiment of this verse is of universal application in regard to evil-doers, but probably refers in this place more particularly to tyrants.

12. — *and have his days prolonged :* i. e. in or by his wickedness. Comp. ch. vii. 15. Or, though no evil happen to him for a long time. The verse evidently refers to retribution in this life, as appears from the next verse.

13. — *shall not prolong his days :* i. e. he shall come to a sudden and violent end. Comp. Prov. x. 27, Ps. lv. 23. Some understand this verse as an imprecation, in order to avoid a seeming inconsistency between it and the last. But the wicked may have his days prolonged *for a time*, and yet come to an untimely end. Comp. pp. 80 – 83.

Ch. VIII. 14 – IX. 10. In this section the Preacher goes on to illustrate the vanity of earthly things, as exhibited in the apparently equal prosperity of the righteous and the wicked, and the difficulty of understanding the divine proceedings in the affairs of the world. He repeats and farther illustrates these ideas, and proceeds to recommend the present enjoyment of life's blessings as wiser than to live in anxiety about distant good, or perplexity about the mysteries of human affairs. See p. 91.

14. On the consistency of this sentiment with the preceding verses, see pp. 80 – 83.

15. *Then I commended joy*, &c. Some understand this as the

cavil of an objector; but without reason. The meaning is, Since a man has so little power over his condition, since he can understand so little of the reasons upon which the outward condition of the righteous and the wicked is allotted, it is best for him not to perplex and torment himself about these seeming disorders of the world, but to live in cheerfulness and tranquillity, freely enjoying the present good things which are allotted him, without anxious cares respecting the distant future, or painful efforts to discover the reasons of the divine proceedings. Comp. ch. ii. 24, and the note. — *it is this that abides with him*, &c.: i. e. the use and enjoyment of what a man obtains by his labor is all that can properly be called his own. Whatever estate, possession, &c., he may acquire will be left to others. The use and enjoyment only are his own.

16. — *to know wisdom, and to see the business*, &c.: i. e. to advance myself in wisdom, and to observe the vain and wearisome labors of men. I suppose that *wisdom*, in this verse, refers particularly to a knowledge of the causes and reasons of the divine proceedings; and that *to see the business which is done*, means to find out or understand the work of God, as in the next verse, and the mysteries of the government of the world. — *does one see sleep with his eyes*. The restless, anxious activity of men in general is denoted. Some translate, *does it*, i. e. the mind, *see sleep with its eyes;* but this seems to be too harsh a metaphor.

17. — *the whole work of God:* i. e. the method and reasons of his proceedings in administering the affairs of the world; why, for instance, he suffers the wicked to prosper and the virtuous to be oppressed, as in ver. 9, 14. This the Preacher maintains to be beyond the comprehension of man.

Ch. IX. 1. — *in the hand of God*. This phrase denotes sometimes, *to be in the power of God*, sometimes, *to be under his protecting care*. Both senses are applicable here. — *yet neither his love nor hatred does man know:* i. e. from the good or bad outward condition of a man it cannot be determined whether God loves or hates him. — *All this*, &c.: i. e. all that is asserted in the next verse respecting the common fortune of the good and the bad.

2. *All things* [*happen to them*] *as to all:* i. e. to the righteous, as to all other men. "For there is no certain and constant distinction made between one man and another in the distribution of things in this world; but they all fare alike, especially in public calamities; a righteous man, for instance, perishes in a battle, as well as the wicked; he that keeps himself pure and undefiled

dies in a pestilence, as well as the filthy and unclean; he that worships God in sincerity and truth suffers by storms, shipwrecks, and inundations, &c., as well as a profane person or a hypocrite; and, on the contrary, a blasphemer of God, nay, a perjured wretch, prospers and thrives as much as he that dreads the holy name of God, and dare not rashly, much less falsely, take it into his mouth." Patrick. In regard to the seeming inconsistency of the Preacher, see the Introduction, pp. 80, 81, &c. — *to the clean, and to the unclean.* There is probably reference here to legal purity or impurity, according to the statutes of the Mosaic code. Of the difficulty in regard to the divine government arising from the facts which he here states the author proposes no solution. He says expressly that he cannot find out, or comprehend, the work of God in regard to it. The solution which occurs to the mind of the Christian does not appear to have occurred to him. He seems rather to deny a future life in the following verses, namely, 5 and 6. A Christian, stating such facts, would naturally be led to speak of a retribution after death, and to excite his readers to look to it, as a motive to perseverance in well-doing, and a relief to his doubts and difficulties relating to the government of God. The only inference which the author seems to draw from the perplexing facts which he states is, that it is best to give up all anxiety about such dark and difficult subjects, and to enjoy the good things of life while they last. From what the writer asserts, and from what he omits in the first ten verses of this chapter, it seems very doubtful whether he had any belief in a future life, or a state of retribution after death. Some writers among the Jews and Christians have supposed these verses to be spoken in the character of an impious Epicurean. But there seems to be no ground for this supposition. On the difficulty presented by this passage, and similar ones, in relation to the mode in which the author reconciled the sentiments contained in it with his own doctrine of retribution as elsewhere expressed, "that it shall be well with them that fear God," and that "it shall not be well with the wicked," and that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," ch. viii. 12, 13, xii. 14, see the Introduction, pp. 79 – 84.

3. — *madness*, &c.: i. e. great wickedness. The sentiment of the verse is the same as that in ch. viii. 11. — *and afterward:* i. e. after the vicissitudes of life. — *they go down to the dead.* This may be added to illustrate the vanity of human things, or to

illustrate the sentiment, that a common lot happens to the righteous and the wicked; both being under the necessity of going down to the dead.

4. *For who is there that is excepted:* i. e. exempted from death. — *there is hope.* However miserable may be a man's condition while living, he has yet this advantage over the dead, that he can hope for a change for the better. Comp. Job vii. 6–10.

5. — *know that they shall die.* They know that they must die, and of course they know and feel that they are alive, and may have much enjoyment before death arrives. — *advantage:* i. e. from their possessions, &c., all of which are left to their heirs. — *for their memory is forgotten:* i. e. so far are they from having any enjoyment of their possessions, that it is altogether forgotten by their successors that such persons ever lived.

6. — *which happens under the sun.* Some have erroneously supposed that this expression is used in contradistinction to another world, in which the dead might have a portion. But the phrase is not used in this emphatic sense. Thus, in ch. i. 9, the author says, "There is no new thing under the sun." See also ch. ii. 18. When I consider that this description of death, as the end of man's activity, faculties, feelings, and enjoyments, is made without any qualification; that it follows the statement of the mysterious conduct of Providence in allotting the condition of the righteous and the wicked; and that, instead of being followed by any reference to a future life, by way of encouragement to the virtuous, or of terror to the wicked, or of explanation of the divine proceedings, it makes the certainty of death only a motive for enjoying the present life, while it lasts; it is very difficult for me to believe that the doctrine of a future life, or of a retribution after death, was a part of the faith of the Preacher.

7. *Go thy way,* &c. "And, therefore, shaking off both all anxious cares, and also all perplexing thoughts about God's providence, ver. 1, excite thyself by the remembrance of death to a cheerful enjoyment of those good things present which thou justly possessest; use them, while thou hast them, with a well pleased, contented, nay, joyful mind." Patrick. Comp. ch. ii. 24, and the note. — *for now is God pleased with thy works:* i. e. with thy labors, and gives them success; and, by giving you the means of cheerful enjoyment, shows his intention that you should use them.

8. — *garments be always white.* This is an exhortation to cheerfulness and joy; as it was the custom for the rich and powerful to

robe themselves in white cotton, especially on festival days. See Jahn's Archæology, § 119; also Esther viii. 15, Rev. iii. 4, 5, vi. 11. See also Hor. Sat. ii. 2, 60.

> "Ille repotia, natales, aliosve dierum
> Festos albatus celebret."

— *fragrant oil:* which it was the custom of the Hebrews to pour upon their heads on days of rejoicing and festivity. See Is. lxi. 3, Amos vi. 6, Ps. xxiii. 5.

9. *Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest.* "Seek for such a wife as thou canst love, and when thou hast her delight thyself in her company, with such unalterable kindness as may help to sweeten the afflictions to which we are subject." Patrick. — *thy portion:* the enjoyment of what you obtain by your labor is all that you can call your own. You can take nothing with you when you go down to the grave. See ch. viii. 15. "Here is a new proof that this is not the speech of voluptuaries; for they love not to be confined to a wife, as the Preacher here advises this happy man to be; making her his partner in all the joys and comforts he hath, as she will be in his grief and sorrows." Patrick.

10. — *thy hand finds to do:* i. e. what thou hast opportunity and ability to do at present, without scheming and anxiety respecting the future. Here the Preacher makes it evident that he does not persuade men to an idle and sensual life, but only to a sober enjoyment of their blessings in an industrious prosecution of their vocations.

Ch. IX. 11 – XI. 6. The Preacher now adduces a new illustration of the vanity of human life in the circumstances that success does not always answer to a man's strength, wisdom, and other advantages; and that wisdom, with all its benefits to the public, often brings but little consideration to its possessor. He adds various proverbs showing the advantages of wisdom and prudence. He speaks of the evil of rulers unfit for their stations, and gives various maxims for the regulation of conduct in private and public. This section closes with a recommendation of liberality to the poor, and diligent exertion, without an over-anxious solicitude respecting the issue of our labors.

11. — *nor favor to men of knowledge:* i. e. the esteem and respect of mankind are not always gained by the wise. Sometimes neglect, envy, and hatred are their portion. — *time and chance.*

In this connection the author has in mind *a time* of misfortune, an unfortunate *chance*, or occurrence. Lord Bacon, as quoted by Patrick, remarks upon the maxim, "Faber quisque fortunæ suæ, Every man makes his own fortune," that we ought to look upon it as "an insolent and unlucky saying, except it be uttered as an hortative or spur to correct sloth. For otherwise, if it be believed as it sounds, and a man enters into a high imagination that he can compass and fathom all accidents, and ascribes all successes to his own drift and reaches, and the contrary to his errors and slippings, it is a profane speech, and it is commonly seen that the evening fortune of that man is not so prosperous, as of him that, without slacking his industry, attributeth much to felicity and providence above him."

12. — *knows not his time.* We need not confine this remark exclusively to the time of one's death. It may refer to the time of any misfortune or calamity. Some understand it in the sense of *suitable time* or *opportunity*; *εὐκαιρίαν.*

13. — *even wisdom:* i. e. I have observed the nature and effects of wisdom, and estimated its exceeding value.

15. — *yet no man remembered*, &c.: i. e. no man thought of him after the danger was past. Thus the remark in ver. 11 is illustrated, that favor is not always to the wise.

17. — *are sooner heard:* i. e. in times of danger and distress, though they may be disregarded in times of prosperity. — *foolish:* literally, *who is among fools.* So in Ps. cxviii. 7, the literal rendering is, *Jehovah is among my helpers:* i. e. *Jehovah is my helper.* See Gesen. Lex. on the preposition ב.

18. *But one offender:* i. e. against the rules of wisdom and prudence, as the connection seems to require. One man, by his rashness and imprudence, may bring ruin, not only upon himself, but upon many, even upon whole nations.

Ch. X. 1. — *a little folly.* The Preacher seems in this verse to intend to illustrate the evil which a foolish man may occasion to the cause in which he is engaged. He is a marplot, and often does more mischief than many wise counsellors can remedy. The rendering of the common version, which has no better support from the Hebrew than mine, is less agreeable to the connection.

2. — *wise man's mind:* literally, *heart*, which was regarded as the seat of the mind by the Hebrews, as the brain is by the moderns. — *at his right hand:* i. e. he can use his mind to some purpose, can exercise a ready judgment on every occasion; as men in

general can readily and efficiently use their right hand, but not their left.

3. — *walks in the way.* I should understand this literally of the gait, behaviour, and talk of a person, as he passes through the streets. —*proclaims*, &c.: i. e. by his behaviour, that he is himself a fool. Otherwise, he thinks and declares that all others are fools.

4. — *leave not thy place:* i. e. in anger and discontent. Do not abandon his service hastily and rashly, but continue in the faithful and quiet discharge of the duties of thy station. Comp. ch. viii. 3. — *great offences:* i. e. such as he supposes thou hast committed against him. Let not, therefore, a false opinion of implacability make thee desperate, and draw thee into rebellion.

5. — *from the ruler:* in appointing unworthy and incapable persons to places of honor and power; or in suffering them to rise to such places.

6. — *set in great dignity:* i. e. raised to honorable stations. — *the noble:* in character, birth, and advantages of possessing wisdom, which it is here presumed that they have used. "Many kings," says Grotius, "suspect those who are distinguished for nobility, or wisdom, or wealth." "Aliena illis virtus formidolosa est: The virtue of others is feared by them." Sallust.

7. — *servants upon horses:* i. e. slaves who had been raised from their servile condition to such eminent stations that they rode upon horses. Riding upon horses was regarded as the badge and privilege of the higher ranks in the East. See Jer. xvii. 25, Ezek. xxiii. 23. —*princes:* i. e. persons of high rank and former opulence who have been depressed by the injustice of the ruler. It has been observed by several writers that persons of high rank and opulence in the East, at the present day, are distinguished from their inferiors by riding on horseback when they go abroad; while those of meaner stations, if not on foot, are obliged to content themselves with the ass or the mule.

8. *He that digs a pit*, &c. The proverbs which follow, to ver. 20, have been supposed to be cautions against sedition and rebellion against kings, having reference to ver. 4. But such an application of them is rather forced and arbitrary. It seems more probable that they are general maxims for the wise conduct of life, in the midst of the vanities and dangers of the world, which the Preacher has described. See Prov. xxvi. 27. — *breaks through a hedge:* i. e. with the design of stealing fruits. — *a serpent:* such as is

usually found in hedges. The proverb shows the evil consequences of dishonesty to him that practises it.

9. *Whoso removes stones*, &c.: i. e. great stones, for the handling of which their strength is insufficient. The design of both the proverbs in this verse is, to show that rash and imprudent men, who engage in difficult and dangerous undertakings, often injure themselves thereby. — *cleaves wood*, &c. This proverb amounts to the same thing with the common one, that it is dangerous to meddle with edge-tools.

10. *If the iron be blunt*, &c. "This is sufficient to show how unprofitable all our endeavours are without true judgment. For as a rusty tool, though managed by the strongest man, is so far from effecting his desires that it only tires his arm, unless he file and whet it to recover its edge, so all the power in the world rather hurts than advantages him that has it, unless it be guided and directed by prudence." Patrick. See ch. ix. 16, 18.

11. *If a serpent bite*, &c. This proverb is in commendation of wisdom. As the poison of the serpent is avoided only by the utmost care and circumspection, so is it with the dangers arising from intercourse with men. It is equivalent to the common one, that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It is too late to begin to enchant when the poisonous bite is given. Perhaps there may be reference to the avoiding of danger from the powerful by turning away their wrath by conciliating language. See the next verse. — *the charmer*, literally, *the lord of the tongue*, has in this case no advantage from his art, but rather severe injury Comp. Sirach xii. 13, Ps. lviii. 4; 5, Jer. viii. 17. For some very remarkable accounts given by travellers in Egypt and the East, respecting the power which certain persons possess of charming serpents, and depriving them of the power of poisoning by music and other means, see Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Inchantments*.

12. — *gracious:* i. e. mild, kind, agreeable, and thus conciliate favor; while those of the fool are harsh and offensive, and bring evil upon him.

13. *The beginning*, &c.: i. e. All his talk, from beginning to end, is folly, and he proceeds from bad to worse, from folly to rage, which ends in mischief to himself or to others.

14. — *multiplies words*, &c. The Preacher seems to allude to the folly of those great talkers who speak with confidence of their intentions and plans for the future, or who are fond of predicting what will happen in time to come.

15. — *knows not how to go to the city.* This language probably had the emphasis and point of a proverb. *To go to the city* is an instance of what ought to be familiar and well known. The meaning is, that the foolish man, in his labors and pursuits, is like a traveller ignorant of the road, who, in going to a city, takes difficult, troublesome, or dangerous circuits, which bring him no nearer to the end of his journey.

16. — *king is a child.* This may be understood literally, as setting forth the evils of having a child for a king. But I should rather understand it of a king resembling a child in disposition, character, and conduct, one who gives himself up to amusements and neglects the weighty concerns of government. Rosenmüller quotes from the Arabic Anthology a similar proverb: — "The blow of an axe upon the head is lighter than the government of one of the young colts." — *feast in the morning.* Jahn, in his Archæology, § 145, says, — "Not only the inhabitants of the East generally, but the Greeks and Romans also, were in the habit of taking a slight dinner about ten or eleven o'clock of our time, which consisted of fruits, milk, cheese, &c. Their principal meal was about six or seven in the afternoon." Hence, *to eat*, i. e. to feast, *in the morning* was regarded as intemperance, and as consuming the time which ought to be devoted to affairs of government. Comp. Is. v. 11, Acts ii. 13–15.

17. — *a noble:* i. e. resembles those who are truly noble in disposition and character, according to a well known Hebraism.

19. — *money answers all things:* i. e. procures, supplies, all things. From the condemnation of idleness the Preacher passes to the commendation of that which is procured by diligence, i. e. money, affirming, that, while of other good things one procures one advantage, and another another, money procures all. So Hor. Epist. i. 6, 36: —

> "Scilicet uxorem cum dote, fidemque, et amicos,
> Et genus, et formam, regina pecunia donat."

20. There is probably no allusion here to the custom of sending letters by pigeons, as some suppose. The idea is, that the king will get intelligence of what is said against him in some unknown and unsuspected way, as if a bird of the air was passing by the window, and carried it. There is an English proverb, "Hedges have ears"; and "The walls will speak."

Ch. XI. 1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters.* There can be little doubt that this verse is a recommendation of liberality in giving to the needy; but, respecting the explanation of the proverb, there are different opinions. Some suppose the allusion is to the planting of corn or rice upon wet places, or such as are even covered with water, which yield an abundant harvest. The objection to this is, that, if there be an allusion to any custom of this kind, it would not be practised without the confident expectation of a harvest; in which case the precept would relate to industry rather than to generosity. Besides, the language is, "Cast *thy bread*," &c., not thy grain. It may not be amiss to observe, that the cakes of the Hebrews were thin and light, such as would float for a time on the water. "The cakes when made were round, and nine or ten inches in diameter. The unleavened cakes were not thicker than a knife, but the leavened were as thick as a man's little finger. Hence they were not cut with a knife, but broken." Jahn's Archæology, § 140. Thus the meaning of the proverb may be, Bestow thy gifts with the utmost liberality, even upon those who, by reason of their ingratitude or their extreme poverty, may seem to be as unlikely to make any returns to thee, as the water upon which it might be cast. Win the good-will of all, even of the lowest, by acts of kindness. You may receive a return from them; if not, you will be rewarded by God. Rosenmüller observes that the Arabs have a similar proverb, — "Do good; throw bread into the water; it will one day be repaid thee." The Turks have borrowed it from the Arabs, with a slight alteration: "Do good; throw bread into the water; even if the fish does not know, yet the Creator knows it."

2. — *a portion:* i. e. a part of thy good things or provisions. — *to seven*, &c.: i. e. to many, not limiting your beneficence, except by your ability. Comp. Mic. v. 5. — *thou knowest not what evil*, &c.: i. e. some calamity may strip thee of thy property, and make thee an object of charity, when thou mayst receive aid from some one of those whose good-will thou hast secured by thy beneficence.

3. *When the clouds*, &c. There is some difficulty in explaining both the proverbs of this verse so as to make them illustrate the same thing. It is commonly supposed that the duty of the wealthy man is enforced by allusion to the clouds, which are not filled with moisture for themselves, but pour it down freely and plentifully upon the thirsty earth, even upon the barren as well as upon the fertile soil. Rosenmüller observes that a liberal man is compared

to a cloud which promises rain, in one of the Arabic poets. — *and when the tree falls.* Grotius explains this as meaning that benefits should be bestowed without much consideration of the object upon which they are bestowed, as he who cuts down a tree does not care much which way it falls. Others suppose the meaning to be, that, as a tree will certainly be found by its owner in the place where it is cut down, so a benefit, wherever it is bestowed, whether upon a worthy or an unworthy person, shall be found a blessing to the author of it, as bread cast upon the waters will afterwards be found, ver. 1. Others suppose the verse to be designed to illustrate a new sentiment, namely, that what must come will come; that there are events which cannot be prevented by any foresight, or remedied by human care; and that what cannot be cured must be endured. When the cloud is full, the rain will fall, without regard to our wishes; and where the tree has fallen, there it will stay, whether we like it or not. Comp. ver. 6.

4. — *watches the wind*, &c. This proverb may imply a recommendation not to be overscrupulous in the exercise of charity. But it is, perhaps, more probable that it relates to human conduct in general, in relation both to business and duty. He that is deterred from any undertaking by every appearance of hazard or inconvenience will never accomplish any thing; as he that will not sow till the wind comes from exactly the right quarter may let the seedtime pass by; and he that will not reap because he is afraid of every cloud that threatens rain may lose his harvest.

5. — *the way of the wind:* i. e. whence it comes and whither it goes. Comp. John iii. 8. Both of the images in this verse are designed to set forth the incomprehensibility of Providence, or the uncertainty how God will order the course of things, what evil he will send, or what good, whether storms or sunshine, rain or drought, or whether life itself will be continued. The inference seems to be, that we are to be active in duty and business, and leave events to the care of Providence.

6. — *whether this shall prosper, or that:* i. e. that which is sown early, or that which is sown late. See the note on ver. 4 and 5.

Ch. XI. 7 – XII. 8. In this portion of the book the Preacher passes to a new topic, and exhorts to a cheerful enjoyment of life while it lasts, in the participation of pleasures which in their nature and degree are consistent with the thought of retribution and the remembrance of the Creator. The consideration of the long night of death and the grievous infirmities of age are urged as a reason for dispelling anxiety and sorrow while the opportunity for enjoyment lasts. Comp. ch. ii. 24, and the note.

7. — *the light*, &c.: i. e. life is dear to all. To see the light, to behold the sun, is figurative language for *to live*.

8. In this verse the Preacher assigns a reason for the assertion in the last. — *he rejoices in them all*: i. e. he does not become weary of life; he rejoices that year after year is added to his life, and does not wish it to terminate. The reason is added, namely, *he remembers the days of darkness*: i. e. the long night of death which succeeds life. Comp. Job x. 21, Ps. lxxxviii. 12. — *All that comes is vanity*. The connection seems to show the meaning to be, All the future, after the present life is closed, is vanity or nothingness. Comp. ch. ix. 4–6.

9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth*: i. e. in the time of thy youth. This verse is commonly understood in an ironical sense, like the language of Elijah to the priests of Baal, "Cry aloud, for he is a god." But from the connection in which the verse stands, and from a comparison of it with other passages in the book, in which the writer recommends *present enjoyment*, in opposition to anxious care, as a man's only portion in the midst of the vanities and uncertainties of life, it is far more probable that the exhortation is serious. See ch. ii. 10, 24, iii. 12, 13, 22, v. 18, vi. 9, vii. 14, viii. 15, ix. 7–9. So the verse is understood by Jerome, Martin Luther, Bishop Patrick, and other interpreters. The Preacher regards the season of youth as the peculiar season of enjoyment; but he would have all the pleasures of youth consecrated by the remembrance of the Creator, being innocent in their nature, and pursued only to such an extent as is consistent with the Creator's laws, and with the retribution which attends the violation of them. The expression, "Walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes," to one accustomed to the Christian sentiment of faith in a future life, would seem at first to be used in an ironical sense. But it is susceptible of a good one, namely, Pursue such things as will gratify your desires and delight your senses; and the necessary qualification is immediately added, namely, that the pursuit of enjoyment is to be in consistency with the thought of judgment or retribution from God; that he will bring us into judgment in relation to the virtuous use or sinful abuse of our blessings. The laws of the Creator, and the penalties or consequences annexed to their violation, are to be kept in mind.

In Numb. xv. 39, "to seek after one's own heart, and one's own eyes" is used in express opposition to "remembering the commandments of the Lord," and of course should have no influence on the explanation of these phrases when used in a different connection.

10. — *sorrow from thy heart*, — *evil from thy body.* The connection, as well as such passages as ch. ix. 7 – 9, and others referred to in the preceding note, seems to require us to understand the verse as an exhortation to banish anxiety and sorrow from the mind, and from the body whatever is painful or noxious; in other words, to recommend a cheerful enjoyment of life, from the consideration, that the season of youth is transitory, passing away like a vapor.

Ch. XII. 1. *Remember*, &c. This sentiment is to be connected with what goes before. Youth is not only the season of enjoyment, but of religion. In that interesting period of life, cheerfulness and joy are to be cherished, the pleasures of life are to be enjoyed, sorrow and pain are to be banished; but the whole conduct in relation to these things is to be regulated by the remembrance of the Creator, of the intimate relation in which the creature stands to him, of the blessings which he has received from him, of the duties which he owes to him, and of the judgment appointed by him, into which he is to be brought.

2. In verse 1, the Preacher has exhorted the young to remember the Creator in the peculiar season of their enjoyments and capacities, which is also the season of their temptations, before the troubles and infirmities of age should arrive. He now proceeds to give, in figurative, or what may be called enigmatical language, a more particular description of the troubles, decays, and infirmities of old age. — *sun, and the light*, &c. I do not understand this of the dim-sightedness of old men, which is alluded to in the next verse. The images in this verse rather set forth the gloom and sadness which belongs to old age, when every thing looks dark and cheerless. — *and the clouds return after the rain:* i. e. when one trouble seems to tread upon the heels of another, causing continual sadness; when after the rain no sunshine succeeds, but only perpetual clouds.

3. Here the decay and infirmities of the human body in age are compared to a house decayed and falling into ruin. Comp. Job iv. 19, 2 Cor. v. 1. — *keepers of the house:* i. e. the arms, which guard the body from injury, defend it from assault, supply it with food, &c., and which are subject to weakness and trembling in

age. — *men of war:* or soldiers. See Deut. iii. 18, 1 Sam. xiv. 52, 2 Kings xxiv. 16. They here denote the thighs and legs, on which the body rests for support, but which in old men become feeble, bent in walking, and unfit for their office. — *and the grinders cease.* The image is drawn from grinding by the hand-mill, which was performed by Hebrew servants in the house. Exod. xi. 5. — *cease:* i. e. cease to grind. It represents the teeth of the aged man, which are too few to discharge their office of preparing the food for the stomach. — *those that look out of the windows:* i. e. the eyes, which look through the cavities of the head in which they are placed, as it were through the windows of a house. They are said to be darkened, in reference to the dimness of sight common to the aged. Comp. Gen. xxvii. 1, xlviii. 10.

4. — *when the doors are shut in the streets*, &c. Some understand this literally of the doors of the old man's habitation, in reference to his remaining at home. But it seems best to understand it allegorically of his lips, which are elsewhere called doors, in the Scriptures. See Job xli. 14, Micah vii. 5. The meaning is, that the old man seldom opens his mouth to eat or to speak, it being difficult to do either when the teeth are gone. — *rise up at the voice of the bird.* The aged man's restlessness or difficulty of enjoying sound and long sleep is here described; he is awaked by the earliest chirping of birds in the morning, and so compelled to rise. — *all the daughters of music:* all songstresses, all the women who sing, or, perhaps, all musical voices or sounds. — *are brought low:* i. e. sound low, are not heard by him, in consequence of his deafness. So old Barzillai, in 2 Sam. xix. 35, says, "Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?"

5. — *they are afraid of that which is high:* i. e. on account of their weakness, or short breath, or dizziness, they are afraid to ascend stairs, hills, &c. — *and terrors are in the way:* i. e. terrors for them. They are afraid of walking in a common way, lest they should stumble, or meet with some accident. — *and the almond is despised:* i. e. so rich and delicate a fruit as the almond is rejected by the toothless old man. Others, with the common version, *the almond-tree shall flourish;* referring to the white hairs of the old man. This does not agree so well with what follows; and, besides, it is said that the blossoms of the almond-tree are not white, but rose or flesh-colored. See Pliny, Hist. Nat. 16, 25. — *and the locust is a burden:* i. e. the locust, which was a common food with the Orientals, and which may have been regarded as of easy diges-

tion, cannot be eaten or digested by the old man. The locust would hardly be mentioned as an instance of a very light thing resting upon the old man. It would be a disagreeable thing, at least, lighting upon any one. — *and the caper-berry fails:* i. e. to excite appetite, or other natural desire. See Gesen. Lex. ad verb., who refers to Plutarch, Quæst. Symp. 6, 2, and to Pliny, Hist. Nat. 13, 23, ib. 20, 15, as showing that the caper-berry was regarded by the ancients as a provocative of appetite and lust. The translation *caper-berry* is supported by the Sept., Vulg., and Syr. versions. The common version expresses the sense, but not the literal meaning. — *since man goes*, &c.: i. e. the aged man is on the point of being carried to the grave, his long or everlasting home, comp. Tob. iii. 6, with the usual mourning solemnities. By *mourners* may be understood not only the relatives, but such hired mourners as are mentioned in Jer. ix. 17, Amos v. 16, upon which see the note.

6. — *before the silver cord be snapped*, *and the golden bowl be broken.* From plain language the Preacher now returns to that which is allegorical, setting forth the decline and loss of the vital powers in man by new images. The exhortation, "Remember thy Creator," is to be regarded as repeated at the beginning of this verse. The metaphor, by which loss of life is denoted, is borrowed from a lamp suspended from a ceiling by a silver cord. The golden bowl is the bowl or reservoir of oil, from which it is distributed into the branches, in which the wicks are placed from which the light proceeds. See Zech. iv. 2, and the note, Job xxix. 3, and the note. The cord by which this golden bowl or reservoir of oil is suspended, being decayed with age, giving way, and so suffering the bowl of oil to fall upon the floor and be broken, and thus extinguish the lamps, affords a striking image of the breaking up of the human machine, and the extinction of its life, which, by a very common metaphor, is said to be suspended upon a brittle thread. We need not inquire what internal part of the body is denoted by the silver cord, or the golden bowl; whether by the former is denoted the spinal marrow, the nerves, the veins, or arteries; or whether by the golden bowl is denoted the heart, the brain, &c.; since it is extremely doubtful whether the Preacher refers to either. The general image presented by the breaking of the lamp, and of the silver cord which held it up, sufficiently illustrates the extinction of life. — *or the bucket broken at the fountain*, *or the wheel broken at the well.* By *the fountain* here is denoted a place from

which the water could be obtained only by being drawn up by *a bucket;* an earthen one, indeed, and used for carrying water as well as drawing it, but originally for drawing it, as appears from the derivation of the Hebrew term. The water could not be procured, when the bucket and the wheel, by which the water was drawn from the well by a line and bucket appended to it, were broken. Water-wheels are still used in the East; Niebuhr has given a picture of one in his Description of Arabia. Indeed, water-wheels are not uncommon in this country. By the images of the broken bucket and wheel, in consequence of which no water could be procured, is set forth the decay and dissolution of the human body through age, in consequence of which the life cannot be retained in it. Some have undertaken to point out what internal part of the body was denoted by the bucket, the fountain, the wheel, and the cistern; I do not think the Preacher intended such a particular application of the terms.

7. — *and the dust*, &c. This is the most literal rendering; *and* being the translation of the Hebrew conjunction ו. — *and the spirit return to God who gave it.* See the notes on ch. iii. 19, 21. In those notes I have given reasons for the supposition, that by *spirit* the author understands the vital spirit, which was breathed into man by the Almighty when he had formed him out of dust, and not the soul, considered as having a conscious personal existence. In view of the considerations presented in those notes, it seems improbable that this verse expresses the doctrine of the immortality of the conscious soul. It is more probable that the expression has the same meaning as in Job xxxiv. 14, 15, —

> "Should he set his heart against man,
> He would take back his spirit and his breath;
> All flesh would then expire together;
> Yea, man would return to the dust."

This conclusion is strengthened by the verse which follows. When the Apostle Paul proclaims the Christian doctrine, that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, he adds, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" If the Preacher had expressed a similar sentiment, would he have added in the very next verse, *Mere vanity, all is vanity?* If by the return of the spirit to God he had understood what a Christian would now express by the language, would no joy have been awakened by the thought? Would he not have made use of the doctrine for consolation, in a discourse upon the vanity of earthly things? Would the only way in which he spoke of the return of the spirit to God be that of regarding it as the consequence of the breaking up of the human system, the last act of the sad drama of life, rather than as the commencement of a happier existence? A review of the passages in which the Preacher alludes to the condition of man after death is, on the whole, inconsistent with his faith in the immortality of the conscious soul. In ch. iii. 18 – 21, he complains of the sad condition of man, in that the same lot befalls him which befalls the brutes, the body of each returning to the dust out of which it was formed; and in verse 21 he asks, "Who knows the spirit of man, whether it goes upward, and the spirit of a beast, whether it goes downward to the earth?" This is the rendering which the Hebrew idiom demands. It seems to imply that some had maintained that there was a different residence for the spirit of a man after death from that which was allotted to brutes, but that the writer doubted the correctness of the opinion. In the next verse the same doubt is repeated: — "For who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" In ch. vi. 12, the writer expresses the same doubt in nearly the same words. In ch. viii. 6 – 9, the Preacher reminds the wicked of a day of judgment which he cannot escape. But he evidently has in view retribution on earth. In ch. ix. 4 – 6, we have another strong expression of the writer's views, which can hardly be reconciled with faith in the soul's immortality. The frequent recurrence of his doubts on this subject, and the practical exhortations which are founded on them, indicate that he had no faith in the soul's immortality. In ch. xi. 9, and xii. 14, it is most consistent with the tenor of the whole book to regard the judgment spoken of as occurring in the present world. It is also to be observed that language similar to that of the verse on which we are commenting is used by the ancient philosophers who had no belief in the soul's conscious immortality. Thus Lucretius, who, in Lib. III. 418, &c., argues at great length that the soul is mortal like the body, says, Lib. II. 999, &c., —

"Cedit enim retro, de terra quod fuit ante,
In terras; et, quod missum est ex ætheris oris,
Id rursum cœli relatum templa receptant."

"For that which was from the earth goes back to the earth; and that which was sent from the regions of the air, being conveyed back, is again received into the temples of heaven." See, also, the passages from Greek writers quoted by Le Clerc ad loc. Similar expressions might be used by Orientals, who hold the doctrine of the absorption of the soul into the Deity. It would give any one pleasure, without doubt, to find the doctrines of the Christian revelation anticipated by the Hebrew writers, but no good is permanently gained by disguising or sacrificing the truth.

Ch. XII. 9 – 14. This epilogue, on account of the character of its sentiments, is supposed by some critics to have been added to the book by a later writer than the author. But there does not appear sufficient ground for such a supposition, especially if we reject the opinion that Solomon was the author of the book. Knobel regards verse 14 as referring to a retribution in a future life, and therefore inconsistent with the general sentiment of the book. On this account he rejects it as spurious. But if we consider the broad and indefinite mode of expression which is characteristic of the Preacher, and the other passages in which he refers to a judgment, there will be no difficulty in supposing that he refers to temporal retribution in verse 14.

11. — *are as goads:* i. e. they have the same power to stimulate men to the acquisition of wisdom and the practice of virtue, as the goad has to excite the dull ox to put forth more strength, or to go in the right track. — *as driven nails:* i. e. they make a deep and abiding impression, stick as fast in the mind as nails or pegs when driven into boards and beams. Roberts informs us that such expressions are common in Hindostan. It is said, "The words of that judge are quite certain; they are like the driven nails." "I have heard all he has to say, and the effect on my mind is like a nail driven home." "What a speaker! all his words are nails; who will draw them out again?" See Roberts's Illustrations ad loc. — *members of assemblies:* literally, *lords* or *masters of assemblies.* So in Judges ix. 51, the common version correctly translates, "they of the city," where the literal rendering would be "masters of the city." So, Joshua xxiv. 11, "the men of Jericho," instead of "the masters of Jericho." These assemblies were probably composed of the most wise and learned men of a place, who met together to discuss questions of religion, morals, philosophy, &c. Perhaps they had some connection with synagogues. The Jewish doctors of the temple, among whom Jesus was found by his parents, may give us an idea of them. See Lightfoot, Hor. Heb.

et Talmud., upon Matt. iv. 23, and De Synagogis. — *given by one teacher:* i. e. words of the wise, or members of assemblies, such as are uttered by such members among themselves, and are spoken, or written and published, by one teacher, like the Preacher or the author of the book of Ecclesiastes. — *teacher:* literally, *shepherd:* i. e. one who feeds the people with knowledge, as a shepherd feeds his flock. Comp. Prov. x. 21. Some suppose that by *one teacher*, or *shepherd*, God, the inspirer of wisdom, is intended.

12. *Of making many books*, &c. The design of this sentiment seems to be, to urge men to be satisfied with a few good books of the wise, whose words are as goads and driven nails, rather than to perplex themselves with reading many books or making new ones. Dr. Channing has a similar sentiment in his Lectures on the Elevation of the Laboring Portion of the Community. "We need not many books to answer the great ends of reading. A few are better than many, and a little time given to a faithful study of the few will be enough to quicken thought and enrich the mind." "Few of the books read among us deserve to be read. Most of them have no principle of life, as is proved by the fact that they die the year of their birth. They do not come from thinkers, and how can they awaken thought?"

13. — *the end.* This word is used literally, where it elsewhere occurs in this book. Ch. iii. 11, vii. 2. The meaning may be thus expressed. My discourse has come to an end. I have nothing more to say except this, the most important thing which can be said, *Fear God*, &c. — *of all men.* Others translate, *the whole of man:* i. e. his whole business or duty. But such a form of expression is hardly met with in Hebrew, or in other languages.

14. — *into judgment*, &c. See the notes on ch. iii. 19, 21, ix. 2, xii. 7. To those who are familiar with the Christian doctrine of retribution after death the Preacher may seem to allude to it here. But, for the reasons which have been given in the notes referred to, it is more probable that he refers to retribution in this world. So Luther understood it. "Non loquitur autem de judicio extremo, sed usu Scripturæ, et generaliter de quibuslibet judiciis, sive quibus hæretici judicantur et perduntur, sive quicunque impii." See Luther's Comment. in loc. Opera, Vol. IV., p. 46, Edit Wittenb.

NOTES

ON

THE CANTICLES.

Ch. I. 2–8. This song seems to set forth the desire of an innocent country maiden to see her shepherd lover, whom she prefers to follow with his flocks, rather than to dwell in the abodes of royalty. I do not see how verse 7, "Tell me where thou feedest," can be reconciled with the supposition, that Solomon, or any king, was the object of the maiden's attachment. It seems rather to be her desire to escape from the palace, and to be with the humble shepherd, tending his flocks.

2. — *one of the kisses :* literally, *from the kisses :* i. e. with one or some of those peculiar kisses which come from his mouth. Sept. *φιλησάτω με ἀπὸ φιλημάτων*, &c. — *thy love :* i. e. as it is expressed in kisses, caresses, love-tokens, &c. The word is in the plural in the Hebrew. The change of person, by which the absent object of affection is addressed as present, belongs to the vividness of poetic representation, and is probably more common in Hebrew than in other poetry. — *better than wine.* The Eastern poets, and even those of Greece, make a frequent use of this comparison. See Bion, Idyl. A. 49. The stanza in the song of Ben Jonson is well known : —

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine ;
And leave a kiss within the cup,
And I 'll not ask for wine."

3. — *savor*, &c. The fondness of the Orientals for fragrant odors in connection with the dress is well known. Comp. Ps. xlv. 8, cxxxiii. 2, Prov. vii. 17, Amos vi. 6, Lane's Arabian Nights, Vol. I., 405, 536. But, as the lover is represented as a shepherd in verse 7, the savor of his perfumes may be a figurative expression, denoting the acceptableness of his person. — *Thy name.* In the Hebrew there is a resemblance in sound between the words signifying *name* and *fragrant oil*, שֵׁם and שֶׁמֶן, which forms what is called in Hebrew grammar *a paronomasia*, and accounts for the remark on the name of the lover. The meaning is, that such is the reputation of the lover, or the regard in which he is held, that the very mention of his name is as grateful as the fragrance of perfumes just poured forth. Comp. Eccles. vii. 1.

4. *Draw me*, &c. The maiden seeks some advances or encouragement from the lover, and seems to represent that there was danger of the king's taking her to his harem. — *will lead me.* So, with Castalio and some others, I translate the verb הֱבִיאַנִי. It may be one of those cases in which the Hebrew preterite denotes certainty of future action. See Gesenius's Gram. § 124, 4. — *We will praise*, &c. The maiden speaks of herself and her female companions.

5. — *of Kedar :* the name of an Arabian tribe, probably so called from being descended from Kedar, the son of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 13. The tents of the Bedouin Arabs are said by many travellers quoted by Harmer, Observ. xxiii., to be still covered with black goat's-hair cloth. D'Arvieux says, "The Arabs have no other lodgings but their tents, which they call houses. They are all black, of goat's-hair canvass, which the women weave and spin too." Travels in Arabia, ch. xii., p. 181. — *curtains of Solomon :* i. e. of Solomon's tent. That persons of distinction often made use of tents for pleasure may be seen in Harmer's Observations, xxviii. Such tents were often very splendid and costly. See Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Tent.* In regard to the comparison, the meaning evidently is, that the maiden is black as the tents of Kedar, but comely as the curtains of Solomon. Harmer quotes from D'Arvieux, Voy. dans la Palest., p. 214, a passage which illustrates the injury to her beauty which the maiden had suffered by exposure to the sun. "The princesses and the other Arab ladies, whom they showed me from a private place of the tent, appeared to me beautiful and well shaped ; one may judge by these, and by what they told me of them, that the rest are no less so ;

they are very fair, because they are always kept from the sun. The women in common are extremely sunburnt, besides the brown and swarthy color which they naturally have." See Harmer's Outlines, &c., ad loc.

6. *Gaze not*, &c. Addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem, who are supposed to look with wonder upon her presumption, or to assume looks of surprise and doubt. — *My mother's sons:* i. e. my step-brothers. — *My vineyard, my own*, &c.: i. e. My most valued possession, my personal beauty, has been impaired by watching the vineyard of others.

7. — *like a veiled one.* This is the most literal rendering and best supported by usage. It is in the margin of the common version. Sept. *περιϐαλλομένη.* A veiled one denotes a harlot. See Gen. xxxviii. 15. The maiden expresses her fears, lest, if she should be obliged to go about seeking her lover, unacquainted with the place where he was pursuing his business, she might be taken for a harlot. The custom of reposing in the shade during the heat of noonday is thus referred to by Roberts, a missionary in Hindostan: — "Before noon the shepherds and their flocks may be seen slowly moving towards some shady tree, where they recline during the heat of the day." The custom was not confined to the East. Thus, Virgil, Georg. iii. 331: —

> "Æstibus at mediis umbrosam exquirere vallem,
> Sicubi magna Jovis antiquo robore quercus
> Ingentes tendat ramos, aut sicubi nigrum
> Ilicibus crebris sacra nemus accubat umbra."

8. *If thou know not:* i. e. where he is to be found, take care to feed thy kids by the tents of the shepherds, and he will readily be found there with his flock. In the simple style of pastoral poetry, the preparation for a meeting of the lovers at noon with their flocks is of sufficient importance to form the conclusion of the idyl. Some suppose that the lover is the speaker in this verse.

9. *To the horses*, &c. It seems to me, that סֻסָתִי may be regarded as a collective noun with י paragogic, as in Lam. i. 1, Is. i. 21. Otherwise, *To my horse*, or *horses.* In this comparison the resemblance is founded on the splendor of the bride's dress and ornaments, as much as on her personal beauty. See the next verse. On this comparison Harmer remarks: — "If we may believe Maillet, the horses of Egypt are remarkable for their beauty and stateliness, and are sent, as presents of great value, to the great

men of Constantinople, but that strangers cannot procure them, and that he himself, though consul-general, could obtain permission to transport only two of them; and that it appears from the Old Testament they were not less valuable anciently, being eagerly sought for by the kings of Syria. 2 Chron. i. 17. On the other hand, I would remark, that the Eastern people are excessively attached to their horses, particularly the Arabs, who are fond of them as if they were children. D'Arvieux, in particular, gives a diverting account of the affectionate caresses an Arab used to give to a mare of his he had sold to a merchant at Rama; when he came to see it (which was very frequently), he would weep over it for tenderness, kiss its eyes, and when he departed, go backwards, bidding it adieu in the most tender manner.'' It is also observed by Williams, that "The Easterns, so highly valuing their horses, spare no expense to ornament them with the most costly trappings of gold, enriched with pearls and precious stones; and it is very observable that the Arabian and Turkish ladies decorate themselves in a very similar manner, wearing rows of pearls or precious stones round the headdress and descending over their cheeks; gold chains, also, upon their necks and bosoms.'' Williams ad loc. In Wilkinson's Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, Vol. I., p. 106, is a plate representing a royal chariot and horses. From the graceful appearance of the horses, and their gay and rich ornaments, one may conclude that the comparison of an Oriental lady in full dress to the horses in a royal chariot was not unnatural. Wilkinson says, Vol. I., p. 355, "On grand occasions, the Egyptian horses were decked with fancy ornaments; a rich striped or checkered housing, trimmed with a broad border and large pendent tassels, covered the whole body, and two or more feathers, inserted in lions' heads or some other device of gold, formed a crest upon the summit of the headstall." Theocritus, speaking of Helen, makes a comparison somewhat similar, but less direct, Idyl. 18, 30, — *ἅρματι Θεσσαλὸς ἵππος.*

10. — *thy cheeks.* In Robinson's Calmet, p. 270, may be seen a representation of the dress of an Eastern lady, which illustrates this verse. "The Persian ladies,'' says Olearius, "make use of two or three rows of pearls, which are not worn there about the neck, as in other places, but round the head, beginning on the forehead and descending down the cheeks and under the chin, so that their faces seem to be set in pearls.'' Olearius, p. 818. D'Arvieux also describes the Arab women as wearing pieces of gold coin hanging

down by the sides of the face, and adds that they have chains of gold about their necks, which hang down their breasts. La Roque, Voy. dans la Pal., p. 219. See Harmer's Outlines, &c., p. 206.

12. *While the king reclines*, &c.: literally, *is in his circle:* i. e. of friends. It is customary for the immediate attendants of an Oriental ruler to stand in a segment of a circle at a small distance before their lord, as he is seated in the corner of the divan. 1 Sam. xvi. 11, "We will not sit down," is literally, "We will not surround." It would seem to be too harsh a figure to suppose *my spikenard* to mean "my personal charms and graces," though such a supposition is favored by the next verse. See ch. iv. 12, 16.

13. *A bunch of myrrh :* which was probably suspended from the neck by an elegant chain, as being the most fragrant of perfumes. "There was some inconsistency," says Gesenius, "in the accounts of the myrrh-bearing tree, until Ehrenberg discovered and described it. It is now called *balsamodendron myrrha*." The myrrh is a substance distilling in tears from a tree growing in Arabia, which tears harden into a bitter, aromatic gum, which was highly prized, and used in incense. — *abide :* he shall be cherished as the most fragrant perfume, which is constantly in the bosom. It is not so agreeable to the use of language to understand a bunch of the leaves or blossoms of the myrrh-tree to be denoted. For, in ch. v. 5, mention is made of the self-flowing myrrh, i. e. that which distils from the tree in its season, when it is not cut or punctured.

14. — *cypress-flowers*. So with Good, Percy, Boothroyd, and others, I have rendered הַכֹּפֶר. But the term is not properly a translation, but the Hebrew word with an English termination. Thus the Sept. has it *τῆς κύπϱου·* the Vulgate, *cypri*. It is not the cypress-tree, properly so called, but a tall shrub of a very different character. It is the *Lawsonia iners* of Linnæus. The Arabic name of it is *alhenna*, or, without the article, *henna ;* and as this name is becoming more known through the writings of modern travellers, perhaps it would have been better to translate the line, *My beloved is to me a bunch of alhenna* or *henna-flowers*, &c. The best description of it is given by Sonnini, who has also furnished an engraved representation of it. See Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Egypte, Tom. I., pp. 291 – 302. "The henna is a tall shrub, endlessly multiplied in Egypt ; the leaves are of a lengthened, oval form, opposed to each other, and of a faint green color. The flowers grow at the extremity of the branches, in long and tufted bouquets. In truth, this is one of the plants the most grateful to

both the sight and the smell. The gently deepish color of its bark, the light green of its foliage, the softened mixture of white and yellow, with which the flowers, collected into long clusters like the lilac, are colored, the red tint of the ramifications which support them, form a combination of the most agreeable effect. These flowers, whose shades are so delicate, diffuse around the sweetest odors, and embalm the gardens and the apartments which they embellish; they accordingly form the usual nosegay of beauty; the women take pleasure in decking themselves with these beautiful clusters of fragrance, in adorning their apartments with them, in carrying them to the bath, in holding them in their hand, in a word, in perfuming their bosom with them." See also Shaw's Works, Vol. I., p. 113, &c. It is by the powder obtained from the dried leaves of the henna, and diluted in water, that the Orientals tinge their nails and other parts of the body with a reddish or deep orange hue. See Lane's Modern Egyptians, Vol. I., p. 54; Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Camphire.* — *Engedi:* a city near the Dead Sea, fertile in vines and palm-trees. Pliny, Nat. Hist., v. 17.

15. — *are doves.* This rendering is certainly the most in conformity with grammatical usage, and is that of the Septuagint version. It is adopted by Hodgson, Ewald, and others. The comparison has reference to the brightness, beauty, and quick motion of the dove. So in ch. vii. 4, "Thine eyes are like the pools at Heshbon." So in the Gitagovinda, Part VII., as in Clarke's Commentary, "His passion was inflamed by the glances of her eyes, which played like a pair of water-birds with blue plumage, that sport near a full-blown lotos on a pool in the season of dew." In the same poem the eyes are frequently compared to blue water-lilies. And near the end occurs the sentence, — "Whence the antelopes of thine eyes may run down and sport at pleasure."

17. — *cedars,* &c. They were not in a house, but a grove, where the trunks and spreading heads of the cedars and the cypresses are poetically called the beams and the roof of their chamber. Thus Milton, describing Adam's bower, —

> "The roof
> Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
> Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
> Of firm and fragrant leaf."
>
> Par. Lost, iv. 692.

Ch. II. 1. — *a harvest-flower*, &c. It is probable that a flower of the crocus species is denoted, namely, *Colchicum autumnale*, a bulbous plant with large and delicate flowers of white and violet. This rendering is confirmed by the Syriac version, and by the etymology of the word. See Gesen. Thes. on חֲבַצֶּלֶת. The maiden does not mean to extol her personal charms, but rather to represent her beauty as nothing extraordinary. The flower arises immediately from the bulb upon a long, naked tube. A description of the plant, with a colored representation of both the bulb and flower, may be seen in Woodville's Medical Botany, Vol. IV., p. 759.

2. — *lily among thorns.* It is not implied that the lily grows among thorns, but that his love surpassed other women as much as the lily the thorn.

3. — *apple-tree.* The corresponding word in Arabic denotes not only the apple, but orange, quince, citron, peach, and apricot trees. The Hebrew word may have been used in the same general sense. But perhaps the apple, though not so beautiful and fragrant as the citron-tree, may have had a poetic value from the comparative rarity which Forskäll ascribes to it. An apple-tree, loaded with fruit among the barren trees of the wood, would be a sufficient foundation for the comparison. — *shadow.* It is to be recollected that shade is an essential article of Oriental luxury. Dr. Pococke tells us, " when he was at Sidon, he was entertained in a garden, in the shade of some apricot-trees, and the fruit of them was shaken upon him." Description of the East, Vol. II., p. 95.

4. — *banqueting-house:* literally, *house of wine.* Comp. Esth. vii. 8. There seems, however, to be good reason for the opinion of Doederlein, who understands the expression, *to lead to his banqueting-house*, in a figurative sense, as denoting that the beloved is, as it were, intoxicating the maiden with love. Compare a similar metaphor in Is. xxix. 9, li. 21. So Umbreit, and Gesenius, and Rosenmüller, " Experiri me fecit dilectus meus, quam suavis sit." The verse following seems to favor this explanation. — *banner over me*, &c.: i. e. I follow the banner or standard of love which my beloved holds up before me, as soldiers follow the standard of their commander and never desert it. — *Strengthen me with raisins:* or, more strictly, *raisin-cakes.* They are mentioned as delicacies with which the weary and languid are refreshed, in 2 Sam. vi. 19, 1 Chron. xvi. 3; also, as offered in sacrifice, Hos. iii. 1. The meaning, *cakes*, is expressed in most of the ancient versions.

6. *His left hand.* In this situation the spouse is represented as reclining upon a divan, where she falls into a quiet slumber, supported by her beloved.

7. — *By the gazelles.* It is common for different classes to swear by that which is most dear to them; the warrior by his sword, the prophet by his soul, &c.; so the daughters of Jerusalem are adjured by what is dear to them, namely, beauty, as it is manifested in the gazelles and the hinds. The Hebrew term denoting *the gazelle* originally denoted *splendor*, or *beauty;* and the animal is used by the Arabs, as well as the Hebrews, as the emblem of what is extremely elegant and beautiful. To be said to have the eyes of a gazelle is the highest compliment that can be paid to an Eastern lady. See Gesen. on צְבִי. — *nor awake*, &c. "In the East," says Roberts, "it would be considered barbarous in the extreme to awake a person out of his sleep. How often, in going to the house of a native, you are saluted with, 'Nittera-kulla-karār,' i. e. 'He sleeps.' Ask them to arouse him; the reply is, 'Koodātha,' i. e. 'I cannot.' Indeed, to request such a thing shows at once that you are a griffin, i. e. a new-comer. 'Only think of that ignorant Englishman; he went into the house of our chief, and, being told he was asleep, made such a noise as to awake him, and then laughed at what he had done.'"

8. *The voice of my beloved*, &c. Some suppose that these and the following words were the substance of a dream which the fair one had, in the sleep mentioned in the last verse. But it is a mere supposition, and wholly improbable. As there is no connection between the train of thought in this passage and the close of the last chapter, we conclude that it forms a distinct idyl or song. It adds to the liveliness of the description, that the fair one is represented in a listening attitude, hearing the voice of her beloved before he appears in sight.

9. — *gazelle*, &c. "These animals are elegantly formed, active, restless, timid, shy, and astonishingly swift, running with vast bounds, and springing or leaping with surprising elasticity; they frequently stop for a moment in the midst of their course to gaze at their pursuers, and then resume their flight." See Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Antelope.*

12. — *time of the singing*, &c. As the word זָמִיר denotes *cutting*, or *pruning*, as well as *singing*, most of the ancient versions understand the line, "The time for pruning the vines has come." Gesenius also adopts this rendering. But the common rendering

is favored by the parallelism, *the voice of the turtle*, i. e. the turtle-dove, &c., also by the circumstance that there is an allusion to the vine in the next verse. As to the objection, that זָמִיר, where it denotes *singing* elsewhere in the Old Testament, refers to the artificial singing of men, the answer is, first, that the singing of birds is not often referred to in the Old Testament by any expression; secondly, if it does usually denote the artificial singing of men, the term may yet be used in a figurative sense by a poet to denote the singing of birds. Nothing is more common in English poetry; for instance, "wood-*notes* wild," "the cock's shrill *clarion*." — *turtle*, &c. The turtle-dove is mentioned as a bird of passage, Jer. viii. 7. Forskäll, the companion of Niebuhr, mentions it as one of the birds of passage which appear at Alexandria about the end of April or beginning of May. See his Descriptio Animal., p. 9.

13. — *is spicing*, &c. The Hebrew term חָנְטָה is used in Gen. l. 2, 3, 26, to denote the *embalming* of a dead body; hence it seems to me more probable that it denotes here *to fill with rich, fragrant juice*, rather than, generally, *to ripen*. So Rosenmüller, Umbreit, and De Wette.

14. *O my dove*, &c. Here the wild dove, which hides itself from birds of prey, or from the approach of man in cliffs of rocks, is used as an emblem of the fair one, unwilling to leave her house to meet her lover. See Jer. xlviii. 28, Hom. Il. xxi. 494, Virg. Æn. v. 213.

"῞Ωστε πέλεια,
῞Η ῥά θ' ὑπ' ἴρηκος κοίλην εἰσέπτατο πέτρην,
Χηραμόν· οὐ δ' ἄρα τῇ γε ἁλώμεναι αἴσιμον ἦεν."

"Qualis spelunca subito commota columba,
Cui domus et dulces latebroso in pumice nidi," &c.

15. *Take ye for us the foxes*, &c. The maiden having come forth to enjoy the spring, the vineyards, &c., it is natural for her now to give directions to have the vineyard made as pleasant as possible by the removal of noxious animals. A similar allusion to foxes is found in Theocritus, Idyl. v. 112: —

"Μισέω τὰς δασυκέρκους ἀλώπεκας, αἳ τὰ Μίκωνος
Αἰεὶ φοιτῶσαι τὰ ποθέσπερα ῥαγίζονται."

"I hate those brush-tailed foxes, that each night
Spoil Mycon's vineyards with their deadly spite."

— *now in blossom.* Sept. *κυπρίζουσι.* So Gesenius, Umbreit, and Ewald. Comp. ver. 13 and vii. 12.

16. — *He feeds*, &c. The Hebrew verb רָעָה has the same ambiguity as the English *feed.* It may mean to feed a flock, as in ch. i. 7, or it may mean to feed one's self. I am inclined to understand it of feeding a flock. Perhaps the flock may have been in an inclosure in the garden or park. It is a recommendation of the beloved to the maiden, that he is a gentle shepherd feeding his flock among the lilies.

17. *When the day breathes.* This is understood by many of the morning. But the more recent commentators, as Gesenius and Rosenmüller, refer it to sunset or the evening. This is most probable. For a grateful, cool breeze is said to spring up at that time. At that time, too, the shadows *flee away*, i. e. continually lengthen themselves, till they are lost in the darkness of the night. So, Gen. iii. 8, *the cool*, literally, *the breeze*, of the day seems to be in contrast with *the heat* of the day, ch. xviii. 1. So here, after the still sultry heat, the day is said *to breathe.* The particle עַד, here translated *when*, seems to be equivalent to עַד אֲשֶׁר, ch. i. 12. — *craggy mountains :* literally, *mountains of division :* i. e. by a well known Hebraism, mountains divided or cut up, cleft, &c. So the Sept. *ὄρη κοιλωμάτων*, mountains of cavities.

Ch. III. 1. This is evidently the beginning of a new song. There is no appearance of a dream ; and in ancient times a dream was regarded of so much importance, that the author would have mentioned it, if he had intended to describe one here. As to any thing inconsistent with probability or propriety, which some have alleged in favor of its being understood as a dream, or as an allegory, it appears to me that the author would not be more likely to violate probability or propriety in a poetic dream, or in an allegory, than in the ordinary products of his imagination.

3. *Have you seen him*, &c. It is a natural circumstance, that the maiden takes it for granted that all the world knows the object of her attachment, though she does not mention his name.

4. — *into my mother's house*, &c. Rosenmüller says, — "It is improbable that a modest female among the Hebrews would do such a thing, and therefore it is to be understood allegorically." But it is as improbable that a Hebrew poet would represent a modest female as doing what is improper, for an allegorical purpose as for any other. The passage is obscure, indeed ; but the suppo-

sition of allegory does not make it clearer. Hodgson remarks on this verse, — "It hath been supposed that this poem was written by Solomon on his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. But this passage seems to prove that the person here married was not Pharaoh's daughter; for if she had been Pharaoh's daughter, her mother's house would have been in Egypt; whereas, this scene lies at Jerusalem; for in the next line she addresses the daughters of Jerusalem, and desires them not to disturb her sleeping husband."

Ch. III. 6–11. The design of this song is commonly supposed to be that of describing a nuptial procession, in which the bride of Solomon is led to the palace in company with himself, in his sedan, or carriage.

6. *Who is this*, &c. The poet speaks, or perhaps a choir of the daughters of Jerusalem. — *from the wilderness.* מִדְבָּר denotes not merely a desert, but what we call the country, in distinction from the city. See Gesen. Lex. Otherwise, *from the wilderness* may denote that the person was coming from the direction of the wilderness. — *pillars of smoke.* It is commonly supposed that the slender and graceful form of the bride, gradually increasing in tallness as she came nearer, is compared to the light and beautiful column of smoke which ascends from a burning censer of incense. Mercier observes that "it is a tradition of the Jews, that the smoke of incense should go up perpendicularly, and that artists were called from Alexandria to make the smoke of incense ascend as straight as possible." He does not give his authority. But as the sedan of Solomon is mentioned in the next verse, is it probable that the bride was on foot? Is it not more probable that the dust caused by the approach of the sedan and its attendants is compared to columns of smoke? Or, might not the pillars of smoke actually ascend from censers borne in front of the procession? "The use of perfumes at Eastern marriages is common, and upon grand occasions very profuse. Not only are the garments scented, till, in the Psalmist's language, they smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, but it is customary for virgins to meet and lead the procession with silver-gilt pots of perfumes; and sometimes even the air around is rendered fragrant by the burning of aromatics in the windows of all the houses in the streets through which the procession is to pass. In the present instance, so liberally were these rich perfumes burnt, that at a distance a pillar or pillars of smoke arose from them; and the perfume was so rich, as to exceed in value and fragrancy all the

powders of the merchant." Williams. Nothing is said of the bride. It is possible, then, that Solomon alone may have been in the carriage. — *powders:* i. e. aromatic powders.

7. — *carriage:* i. e. a kind of open vehicle, now usually called a palanquin, in which the great men of the East are carried, sometimes upon elephants or camels, and at other times on men's shoulders. Niebuhr says, a palanquin completely ornamented with silver, covered with rich stuffs, and suspended on a handsome bamboo, will cost about two hundred pounds sterling. Travels, Vol. II., p. 410.

10. — *by a lovely one.* See ch. ii. 7, iii. 5. So Doederlein and Ewald.

11. — *In the crown,* &c. It was usual with many nations to put crowns or garlands on the heads of new-married persons. The Mishna informs us that this custom prevailed among the Jews; and it seems, from the passage before us, that the ceremony of putting it on was performed by one of the parents. Among the Greeks, the bride was crowned by her mother, as appears from the instance of Iphigenia, in Euripides, ver. 894. "In the Greek Church in Egypt," says Maillet, "the parties are placed before a reading-desk on which is the book of the Gospels having two crowns upon it of flowers, cloth, or tinsel. The priest, after benedictions and prayers, places one on the bridegroom's, the other on the bride's head, covering both with a veil." See Rosenmüller, Alten und neues Morgenland, Vol. IV., p. 196. Selden's Uxor Hebraica, Lib. II., cap. 15.

Ch. IV.–V. 1. This canticle seems to include ch. iv. and the first verse of ch. v. It appears to contain a lover's praise of his mistress, and her replies.

1. — *behind thy veil.* So Hafiz: "Thy cheeks sparkle even under thy veil." Sir W. Jones's Works, Vol. I., p. 453. Another Persian poet says, — "It is difficult to gaze upon the sun without the medium of a cloud. View, therefore, O Saieb, the lovely face of thy mistress through her veil." Orient. Coll., Vol. II., p. 23. — *flock of goats,* &c. Her hair was black and thick, like a flock of goats showing itself on the top of a mountain to one in the distance below.

2. — *teeth:* for whiteness, brightness, fulness, and soundness, they are compared to a shorn flock just coming clean from the washing-place.

3. — *divided pomegranate:* which, in its prime, says Rosenmüller, has a beautiful red color, i. e. when cut in two, equalling or

surpassing that of the rose. So Camoens, Lusiad, Cant. ix. 59, as translated by Mickle, —

> "The pomegranate of orange hue,
> Whose open heart a brighter red displays
> Than that which sparkles in the ruby's blaze."

4. — *the tower of David:* which was probably built of white marble, high and elegant. Upon the outside of towers it was the custom to hang shields, probably as a terror to enemies. See Ezek. xxvii. 10, 11. To the splendid shields and arms with which the tower of David was adorned, are compared the necklaces and jewels which adorned the neck of the maiden.

5. — *gazelles.* See the note on ch. ii. 7. Probably the reference is to their general beauty and loveliness.

6. — *day breathes*, &c. See the note on ch. ii. 17. — *mountain of myrrh*, &c. It is said of Pompey the Great, that, when he passed over Lebanon and by Damascus, he passed through sweet-smelling groves and woods of frankincense and balsam. Florus, Epitome Rerum Rom., Lib. III., c. 6. "Per nemora illa odorata, per thuris et balsami sylvas." This quotation is brought to show, not that the bride was actually on a hill of myrrh, &c., but that such hills of myrrh and incense were supposed to exist, and might afford a subject for comparison. The bride seems to be here compared, in respect to her general charms, to a mountain of myrrh, &c., to whom the lover says he will return, as the antelope flies to the mountain. So Ewald. So some of the Eastern poets represent angels as having bodies of amber and musk. Thus, the poet Assadi says, — "Feridoun and Farrakh were not angels; their bodies were made neither of amber nor musk; it was their justice and liberality that made them celebrated." See Harmer's Outlines, p. 290. Grotius, who is followed by Dr. Good, supposes the comparison to be somewhat more definite, referring to her bosom alone. "Sic vocat mammas ob suavissimum odorem." Grot. The meaning may be, however, that the lover would return to *the place* where she was, where the odor of her charms was diffused. So Doederlein.

8. *Come with me from Lebanon*, &c. Verses 8 and 9 seem to be introduced very abruptly, and their import in this connection is not very obvious. Doederlein and others suppose them to be an invitation to the bride to take an excursion with him, in order that they might admire together all that was grand and beautiful in scenery.

Others suppose them to be an invitation to the maiden to come from a place of danger to a place of complete security in the arms of her lover.

9. — *taken captive my heart:* literally, *hearted me:* according to the English idiom *to skin*, for *to take off the skin.* — *sister:* a term of endearment. So the Romans. Comp. Tibull. 3, 1, 26. — *one of thine eyes.* How powerful must be both united, when only one does such execution! Comp. ch. vi. 5. It has been remarked, that, "supposing the royal bridegroom to have had a profile, or side view, of his bride in the present instance, only one eye, or one side of her necklace, would be observable; yet this charms and overpowers him." Probably, however, the Hebrew poet intended what others mean to express by *one glance* of the eye, &c. Parallel passages might be quoted from many Eastern poets. The song of Ibrahim says, — "One dart from your eyes has pierced though my heart." And, in the songs of Gitagovinda, we find one acknowledging himself "bought as a slave by a single glance from thine eye, and a toss of thy disdainful eyebrow." Asiat. Research., Vol. III., p. 203. Tertullian, however, mentions a custom in the East of women unveiling only one eye in conversation, while they keep the other covered; and Niebuhr mentions a similar custom as prevailing in some parts of Arabia. Travels in Arabia, Vol. I., p. 262.

11. *Thy lips*, &c. Here the sweetness of her voice rather than her kisses is denoted. Comp. Prov. v. 3. So, Hom. Il. i. 249, —

> "*Τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδή.*"

And Theocritus, viii. 82: —

> "*Ἁδύ τι τὸ στόμα τοι, καὶ ἐφίμερος, ὦ Δάφνι, φωνά·*
> *Κρέσσον μελπομένω τεῦ ἀκουέμεν ἢ μέλι λείχειν.*"

12. *A garden inclosed*, &c. The bride is compared to a fragrant garden, a refreshing spring, in respect to her charms, — and to a garden *inclosed*, *a fountain sealed*, in respect to her chastity and fidelity. That fountains or wells, as well as gardens, were sometimes locked up in the East, see Harmer, Obs., Vol. I., p. 113. That this kind of distant imagery is common in the East appears from the following passages: — "Feirouz, a vizier, having divorced his wife upon suspicion of infidelity, her brothers apply for redress in the following figurative terms: 'My lord, we have rented to Feirouz a most delightful garden, a terrestrial paradise; he took possession of it, encompassed it with high walls, and planted it with

the most beautiful trees that bloomed with flowers and fruit. He has broken down the walls, plucked the tender flowers, devoured the finest fruit, and would now restore us this garden robbed of every thing that contributed to render it delicious when we gave him admission to it.' " Miscell. of Eastern Learning, Vol. I., p. 12. In a famous Persian romance, a princess assures her husband of her fidelity in his absence in these terms: — "The jewels of the treasury of secrecy are still the same as they were, and the casket is sealed with the same seal." Bahur Danush, Vol. III., p. 65. See Williams's Sol. Song, p. 278. See also Prov. v. 18.

13. *Thy plants:* or *shoots.* I do not understand this of children, as do most of the commentators, but of the graces and charms of the bride. In the last verse she was compared to a garden. In pursuance of the same metaphor, her charms are compared to odoriferous plants. — *Alhenna*, &c. See the note on ch. i. 14.

15. *A fountain of the gardens:* i. e. a spring that waters many gardens.

16. *Awake, O north wind*, &c. By calling on the north wind at the same time with the south, the maiden expresses the wish that the united influence of the principal winds that blew might shake the plants and cause the fragrance of the garden to be exhaled and diffused. Having been compared to a garden, she says, in substance, "O that the garden were more fragrant," &c.

Ch. V. 1. — *drink abundantly, my beloved.* The Hebrew admits quite as well of the rendering, *drink abundantly of love*, or *make yourselves drunk with love.* So King James's translators in the margin. But the parallelism and the connection seem most favorable to the common version.

Ch. V. 2 – VI. 3. The circumstances introduced into this piece are undoubtedly imaginary; but I perceive no decisive indication that the poet designs to narrate a dream. There is considerable resemblance between this piece and the third ode of Anacreon, beginning, *Μεσονυκτίοις ποθ’ ὥραις.*

2. *I slept*, &c. The meaning is, that though the body was asleep, yet the mind was awake and filled with the object of her affection, so that she heard and recognized the knock of her beloved as soon as it was given.

3. *I have taken off my vest.* The frivolous and coquettish excuses which she gives for not welcoming her lover are here represented. She had prepared herself, and yet pretended she did not

like to rise. — *vest:* i. e. the inner garment, worn next the skin, commonly with sleeves, reaching to the knees.

4. — *by the hole of the door*, &c. Le Clerc has a long and learned note on the ancient mode of fastening a door. In this case, the door was probably secured by a crossbar or bolt, which at night was fastened by a little button or pin. In the upper part of the door was left a round hole, through which any person from without might thrust his arm and remove the bar, unless the security of the pin were superadded.

5. — *self-flowing myrrh:* i. e. that which spontaneously flows from the tree, without cutting or puncturing the bark. This was considered the most valuable kind. The myrrh which dropped from her hands was that which her beloved had left upon the wooden bar of the door. This may be understood figuratively, that the moisture of the beloved's hands wet with dew was like fragrant myrrh, perfuming every thing which came in contact with it; or, a custom may have prevailed in the East similar to that which is mentioned by Lucretius, iv. 1171 : —

> " At lacrymans exclusus amator limina sæpe
> Floribus et sertis operit, postesque superbos
> Unguit Amaracino, et foribus miser oscula figit."

6. *I was not in my senses:* literally, *My soul was gone from me.* The meaning most suited to the connection is, that she acted insanely in not admitting her beloved at his request. It seems to denote that bewilderment of the faculties caused by fear, as in Gen. xlii. 28, or by any other passion; here, by the passion of love.

7. *The watchmen — wounded me*, &c. : i. e. treated me as a lewd, abandoned woman. The same thing is intimated by taking away the veil, in the next line. Comp. Is. xxii. 8, Nahum iii. 5. So Hafiz, in a passage quoted by Dr. Good, speaking of the wife of Potiphar under the name of Zuleikhah, —

> " Led captive by the victor charms
> O'er Joseph's face that play,
> Her veil of chastity at length
> Zuleikhah flings away."

11. — *fine gold:* referring to general splendor and beauty. So Theocritus, Idyl. iii. 28, speaks of the golden Helen. — *palm-branches.* So in Amrolkais, Moallakah, ver. 33, quoted by Rosenmüller, a lover describes the hair of his mistress, — " Et capilli,

qui tergum ornant, nigri, carbonis instar, densi sicut racemi palmæ impliciti." Any one who will look at a good representation of the palm-tree, for instance that in the work of Laborde on Arabia Petræa, will perceive a foundation for this comparison.

12. — *Washed with milk.* This is commonly supposed to denote their milk-white color. In Job xxix. 6, to wash the steps in milk denotes to have great abundance of it; and we are told by Roberts, the missionary, that to be washed with milk is now a proverb in Hindostan, denoting to be in a good and happy condition. See Roberts. But the former explanation seems most suitable to this passage. — *dwelling in fulness.* יֹשְׁבוֹת עַל־מִלֵּאת. I have rendered this phrase literally, as I regard the meaning as quite doubtful. It seems to me most probable that it refers to the pigeons, and not to their eyes, and illustrates their plump appearance, arising from their dwelling near full streams or full fields. The translation of the common version seems harsh and forced. It supposes an allusion to a diamond set in the foil of a ring, denoting that the eyes are neither too much depressed nor too prominent, but well filling the sockets. See the note on ch. i. 15.

13. — *a bed of balsam.* Thus paraphrased by Bishop Patrick:— "The lovely down upon his cheeks is no less grateful; rising there like spices when they first appear out of their beds; or like the young buds of aromatic flowers, in the paradise before described; where the purple lilies are not more beautiful than his lips, from whence flow words more precious and more pleasant than the richest and most fragrant myrrh." The dropping of the lips may, however, refer to the sweet breath. Sadi, the Persian poet, describing a young man, says,—"He had just arrived at the opening blossom of youth, and the down had but newly spread itself over the flower of his cheek." Sulivan's Fables from Gulistan, p. 3, quoted by Williams ad loc. It is possible, however, that there may be some reference to the beard, which was regarded with almost religious reverence in the East. D'Arvieux says, in ch. vii. of his Travels in Arabia,—"One of the principal ceremonies in important visits is to throw some sweet water upon the beard, and then to perfume it with the smoke of lignum aloes, that sticks to this moisture and gives it an agreeable smell." And, in the same chapter,—"The women kiss their husband's beards, and the children their father's, when they go to salute them; the men kiss one another's reciprocally, when they salute one another in the streets, or are come from some journey."

14. *His hands are gold rings.* This comparison has reference to the general beauty of his hands and fingers, and the brilliancy of their ornaments. Some suppose there is a reference to the nails, stained with henna, according to the custom of the Arabians. See the note on ch. i. 14. — *sapphires.* The Oriental sapphire is transparent, of a fine sky-color, sometimes variegated with veins of a white sparry substance, and distinct, separate spots of a gold color. Hence the prophet describes the throne of God as like sapphire; Ezek. i. 26, x. 1. Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxxvii. 9, says, — "Cœruleis, interdum cum purpura, quæ et aureis punctis collucent, ac cœli speciem referunt."

15. — *like Lebanon.* In the manly dignity of his appearance he is compared to the beautiful but majestic Lebanon, with its proud cedars. Volney says, in his description of Lebanon, Travels, Vol. I., p. 293, — "At every step we meet with scenes in which nature displays either beauty or grandeur." — *like the cedars:* i. e. preëminent among men as the cedars among the trees of the forest. Gabriel Sionita, quoted by Dr. Harris, in his Nat. Hist. of the Bible, says, — "The cedar grows on the most elevated part of the mountain, is taller than the pine, and so thick that five men together could scarcely fathom one."

16. *His mouth:* literally, *his palate:* which many suppose to be used as the instrument of speech, as in Prov. viii. 7, Job xxxi. 30. But, comparing the word with ch. vii. 9 (10), it seems quite as probable that it is a euphemism, denoting the moisture or saliva of a kiss. See Gesen. Thes. on חֵךְ, and the note on ch. vii. 9. It is the same word as is here in the common version rendered *mouth*, and in ch. vii. 9, *roof of his mouth.*

Ch. VI. 4. — *Tirzah.* The word itself denotes *pleasantness*, a name given to a city which was the capital of the kingdom of Israel from the time of Jeroboam to that of Omri. It was probably beautiful in regard to its situation, as well as its buildings. — *as Jerusalem.* So, Lam. ii. 15, "Is this the city that men called the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" — *terrible as an army*, &c. Comp. ch. ii. 4. The loved one is represented as conquering, wounding, taking captive the hearts of lovers with her eyes, &c. The idea is carried out in the next verse. So Anacreon, Ode ii.: —

"Γυναιξὶν οὐκ ἔτ' εἶχεν.
Τί οὖν; δίδωσι κάλλος

> Ἀντ᾽ ἀσπίδων ἁπάσῶν,
> Ἀντ᾽ ἐγχέων ἁπάντων·
> Νικᾷ δὲ καὶ σίδηρον,
> Καὶ πῦρ καλή τις οὖσα."

And again, Ode xvi. : —

> "Οὐχ᾽ ἵππος ὤλεσέν με,
> Οὐ πεζός, ὀυχὶ νῆες·
> Στρατὸς δὲ καινὸς ἄλλος,
> Ἀπ᾽ ὀμμάτων με βάλλων."

In the same way, the Arabian poets compare the eyes of virgins to swords and darts, their eyebrows to bows, &c., with which they wound and kill. In fact, the same representation is common to all languages. Cupid is armed with his bow and arrow. And yet Dr. Good makes the tasteless remark, that the epithet *terrible* is obviously inappropriate, and gives the term אֲיֻמָּה the forced meaning, *dazzling*.

5–7. See ch. iv. 1–3.

8. — *queens*, — *concubines*, — *maidens*. Solomon is said, in 1 Kings xi. 3, to have had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Hence, some, who regard this piece as written by Solomon, suppose it to have been written at an earlier period of his reign than that referred to in Kings. Rosenmüller, however, supposes an indefinite use of numbers, and this seems most probable.

9. — *the one :* i. e. *the matchless one.* For this use of the term אַחַת, see Ezek. vii. 5, and Gesen. Lex. ad verb.

10. — *like the morning*. So, Theocritus, Idyl. xviii. 26, —

> "Ἀὼς ἀντέλλοισα καλὸν διέφαινε πρόσωπον,
> Πότνια νὺξ ἅτε, λευκὸν ἔαρ χειμῶνος ἀνέντος,
> Ὧδε καὶ ἁ χρυσέα Ἑλένα διεφαίνετ᾽ ἐν ἁμῖν."

— *as the moon*. So, in Lane's Arabian Nights, Vol. I., p. 29, — "When I beheld her, I thought that the moon had descended to the earth."

12. — *made me like the chariots*, &c. The meaning seems to be, that her strong desire conveyed her thither as swift as the chariots, &c.

13. *Return, return*. This seems to be spoken by a chorus of women who regretted her speedy departure. — *As upon a dance of the hosts :* i. e. with eyes as fixed and earnest, as upon some very uncommon exhibition or spectacle. This may be the lan-

guage of one of the company. As to what is meant by *a dance of the hosts*, it is difficult to form a decided opinion; Gesenius, who is followed by De Wette, supposes the angelic host to be denoted, to whom dancing is ascribed, as elsewhere singing. Comp. Gen. xxxii. 2, Job xxxviii. 7.

Ch. VII. 1. — *sandals*. How important an article of dress were sandals to an Eastern lady is shown in Judith xvi. 9, where we read that the sandals of Judith ravished the eyes of Holophernes. — *neck ornaments:* i. e. bosses or knobs, of which a necklace was composed. She is also represented as *καλλίπυγος*.

2. — *the spiced wine:* mentioned merely to set off the beauty and richness of the cup. — *heap of wheat*, &c. Perhaps a heap of wheat enclosed with lilies was chosen as an illustration, not merely for its appearance, but as an emblem of fertility. "Wheat and barley," says Selden, "were, among the ancient Hebrews, emblems of fertility; and it was usual for standers-by to scatter these grains upon the married couple, with a wish that they might increase and multiply." Uxor Hebraica, Lib. II., cap. 15. It has been conjectured that the heaps of wheat were, during the joyous time of harvest, covered with flowers, especially with lilies.

4. — *ivory*. So a neck of ivory, *ἐλεφάντινος τϱάχηλος*, is ascribed by Anacreon to Bathyllus, Ode xxix. — *pools at Heshbon:* i. e. moist, dark, and bright. Burckhardt thus speaks of the remains of this city: — "At six hours and a quarter [from El Aal, probably the Elealeh of the Scriptures] is Hesbon, upon a hill bearing south-west from El Aal. Here are the ruins of a large ancient town, together with the remains of some edifices built with small stones; a few broken shafts of columns are still standing, a number of wells cut in the rock, *and a large reservoir of water* for the summer supply of the inhabitants." Travels, p. 365. — *tower of Lebanon.* The nose may have been compared to that tower for its height, straightness, and good proportions. The allegorists suppose that the tower-like nose denotes the judgment and discernment of the doctors of the church.

5. — *Carmel:* with its beautiful and verdant summit of oaks and pines. See the article in Robinson's Calmet under this word, with its copious extracts from Oriental travellers. Comp. Is. xxxv. 2. — *like purple.* As there can be little doubt of the correctness of this translation, I suppose the point of comparison is the glossy brightness of the locks, rather than the color of them. Black was the beautiful color for the hair.

7. — *palm-tree.* This tree received its name תָמָר from its straight, upright growth. It is one of the loftiest of trees, sometimes rising to the height of a hundred feet. It is one of the most celebrated trees in the world for its beauty and its uses. — *dates:* the fruit of the palm-tree which grows in clusters below the leaves. See Harris's Nat. Hist., &c., or Robinson's Calmet.

9. — *that goes down smoothly*, &c. See Prov. xxiii. 31. That the maiden or spouse speaks here, taking up the thread of the discourse, is evident from the fact that דוֹדִי, *my beloved*, which occurs often in the Canticles, is always applied to the man, never to the maiden. — *Flowing over the lips*, &c. So, in Lane's Arabian Nights, Vol. II., p. 561, — "The moisture of his mouth is like pleasant wine, that would cool me when a fire flameth within me." Gesenius, in his Thesaurus on the word דָבַב, thus translates and comments: — "*Palatum tuum est instar vini dulcis* (significatur saliva palati) *recta fluens ad suavium meum*, *perreptans labia* una *dormientium* (in eodem toro cubantium). Vereor enim ne recte ita interpretati sint Driessenius in Dissert. Lugd. p. 1101, &c., et Michaelis in Suppl. p. 385, de basio nimirum impudico, neque magis hujus in vetere carmine amatorio mentionem mireris, quam paulo ante (vii. 8) explendæ libidinis. Salivam ab osculantibus imbibendam crebris sermonibus et figuris usurpant Arabes, v. Hug ad Cant. p. 49, v. d. Sloot ad Carm. Togr. p. 134, Ibn Doreid, pp. 113, 114, Scheid. cf. Saad. apud Aben Esram ad Cant. i. 2." See also Rosenmüller ad loc.

11. *Come, my beloved*, &c. It is doubtful whether a new piece commences here, or whether what follows to ch. viii. 5, is a part of the preceding canticle. The passage reminds us of one in Milton, Par. Lost, iv. 610: —

> "To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
> With first approach of light, we must be risen,
> And at our pleasant labor, to reform
> Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green;
> — Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
> That lie bestrown unsightly and unsmooth,
> Ask riddance."

13. — *love-apples.* Such is the etymological signification of the word, which was given to this fruit from its supposed properties. See Gen. xxx. 14, &c. The fruit is that of the *mandragora* (*Atropa mandragora* of Linnæus). Gesenius thus describes the

plant: — "It has large leaves, like those of a beet, a root like that of a turnip, divided at the lower part, and somewhat resembling the human form; used in the preparation of love-potions, having white and reddish blossoms, yellow and fragrant apples, which may be eaten, about the size of a small egg, ripening from May to July, and to which the Orientals in ancient and modern times ascribe an efficacy in increasing philoprogenitiveness and fruitfulness." See Gesen. Thesaurus on the word דוּדַי, and the numerous authorities, ancient and modern, to which he refers. See also Harris's Nat. Hist. and Robinson's Calmet. — *kept them for thee*, &c. So Virgil, Ecl. i. 37: —

> "Mirabar, quid, mœsta, deos, Amarylli, vocares,
> Cui pendere sua patereris in arbore poma.
> Tityrus hinc aberat."

Ch. VIII. 1. — *as my brother:* i. e. as a little infant child, whom she might caress in public as well as in private without impropriety.

2. — *teach me:* i. e. how to please thee, &c.

5. *Who is this*, &c. This is probably the language of the poet; or it may be supposed to be the language of a choir. — *from the wilderness:* i. e. the country, in distinction from the city. — *I excited thy love:* i. e. inspired thee with affection to me. This took place under the apple-tree, which has been regarded as peculiarly the tree of love. The following is the note of Rosenmüller: — "Cydoniam malum apud alios quoque populos amoribus dicatam fuisse, observat Celsius, *Hierobot.*, P. I. p. 263. 'Apud Ægyptios connubii symbolum fuit. *Ζυγίης σύμβολον παφίης*, *Veneris jugæ tesseram*, appellat Arabicus in Epigrammate. Nempe Veneri, ut Dearum formosissimæ, a Paride addictum fuit. Venus igitur in statuis cydonium dextrâ gerit. Cupidines ex hortis malorum primitias legunt, illisque ludunt. *Οἱ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ μήλου παίζοντες πόθου ἄρχονται*, *nam qui pomo ludunt, amoris initium faciunt*, dicit Philostratus Icon. L. I. p. 738. Hinc *τὸ μηλοβολεῖν*, *malis petere, malum mittere, malum dare*, loquutiones frequentes apud Græcos et Romanos. Vid. Theoc. Idyll. iii. 10, v. 88, vi. 6, Virg. Eclog. iii. 64, Aristophanis Scholiastes Nub. p. 180. *Μηλοβολεῖν ἔλεγον τὸ εἰς ἀφροδίσια δελεάζειν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ μῆλον Ἀφροδίτης ἐστὶν ἱερόν·* *malis petere dicebant ad venerea incitare, quippe malus Veneri est dicata.*'" — *brought thee forth*, &c. So the Sept. *ὠδίνησέ σε*. The meaning seems to be explained by the opinion referred to in the

preceding note, namely, that the apple-tree is the tree of love. Thus the birth of the lover under the apple-tree would indicate his power of gaining the love of women. So Apollo is represented as born under a palm-tree. Some suppose that חִבְּלָתֶךְ may be rendered *pledged thee.* This would remove a difficulty, but it does not seem to be supported by Hebrew usage. See Gesenius on חָבַל.

6. — *set me as a seal*, &c. This denotes intimate, inviolable union. Thus, in Jeremiah xxii. 24 : —

> " As I live, saith Jehovah,
> Thou Coniah, son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah,
> Though thou wert the signet upon my right hand,
> Even thence would I pluck thee."

Signet rings were worn by the Orientals not only upon the fingers, but on the bosom, suspended by an ornamental chain from the neck, &c. See Rosenmül. Alt. und Neues Morgenl., I. p. 183, and IV., p. 190. — *True love :* קִנְאָה, rendered *jealousy* in the common version, denotes any ardent feeling. See Gesen. ad verb. It is evident from the parallelism and from the connection, that it is here used simply as an intensive term for *love* in the preceding line. Love is strong, like death, inasmuch as it conquers all ; and it is firm, like the grave, which never relaxes its hold on its tenants.

7. *Many waters*, &c. Love is compared to fire in the preceding verse. In accordance with this, it is added that water cannot quench it. — *for love :* i. e. to induce one to give up the love she has for a particular person, and transfer it to another.

8 – 12. The subject of this little piece seems to be a conversation between two worldly-wise brothers, relating to the marriage of their sister, together with her remarks. That the guardianship of females in regard to marriage belonged to their brothers, in the East, in ancient times, may be inferred from Gen. xxiv. 50, xxxiv. 13, Judges xxi. 22.

8. — *spoken for :* i. e. asked in marriage.

9. *If she be a wall :* i. e. if she be inaccessible, unwilling to receive suitors, or to be married. — *a silver tower.* Rosenmüller supposes the meaning to be, " we will ask a high dowry for her." That portions were paid to the father for the daughter, in the East, is well known. Thus, Jacob served seven years for each of his wives. So it is in modern times. " They bargain," says D'Ar-

vieux, "about the price of the daughter, which the son-in-law is to pay his new father in camels, sheep, or horses. A young fellow that has a mind to marry must in good earnest buy him a wife; and fathers among the Arabs are never happier than when they have abundance of daughters. They are the principal riches in a family; accordingly, when a bachelor is treating with the person whose daughter he is desirous of marrying, he says to him, 'Will you give me your daughter for fifty sheep, for half a dozen camels, or for a dozen cows?' &c. If he is not in circumstances for making such offers as these, he proposes to him to give him her for a mare or colt, all, in short, according to the girl's merit, the condition of her family, and the income of the intended bridegroom." Travels, p. 230, English translation. But perhaps the meaning of *building a silver tower upon the wall* may be simply that the brothers would adorn the sister with silver, in reward for her modesty. — *an open gate:* i. e. very desirous of being married, and give a very ready reception to a suitor. — *with doors of cedar:* i. e. we will take care to keep her in strict confinement, so that access to her shall be difficult.

10. — *shall I be in his eyes*, &c. The future tense seems to be required by verse 8, "She is yet without breasts." The idea of the sister seems to be, that, by modesty and difficulty of access to others, she shall the more surely win the favor of her accepted suitor. Perhaps the expression, *as one that finds peace*, may be a continuation of the preceding metaphor; the suitor being the besieger of the wall and towers.

11. *Solomon had a vineyard*, &c. The vineyard of Solomon, from which he received a great income, seems to be brought in simply by way of contrast to that which the sister regarded as her own vineyard, namely, her beauty or her person; comp. ch. i. 6; and to express the idea, that Solomon was welcome to his income, but that from her vineyard she did not wish for a pecuniary income. She would give her love for love, not for money.

12. *My vineyard is before my eyes:* i. e. I will not let it out to others, but keep it under my own inspection and care.

13, 14. These two verses seem to form a fragment. So far as any general meaning is conveyed by them, it seems to be, that a lover desires a song of his mistress, but is refused and sent away.

13. *Friends*, &c.: i. e. my friends who are with me wait to hear thy voice. Otherwise, thy friends constantly hear it; let me hear it too.

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3. A New Translation of the Book of Psalms, with an Introduction. 1831. (This volume is now out of print.)

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